

THE WORKS

OF

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VOLUME X.

CONTAINING

THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTES.

LONDON:
WESLEYAN CONFERENCE OFFICE,
2, CASTLE-ST., CITY-ROAD;
SOLD AT 66, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM NICHOLS,
46, HOXTON SQUARE.

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THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTES:

OR,

A VIEW

OF

THE EVIDENCES, DOCTRINES, MORALS, AND
INSTITUTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY.

THEOLOGICÆ autem objectum est ipse Deus. Habent aliæ omnes scientiæ sua objecta, nobilia certe, et digna in quibus humana mens considerandis tempus, otium, et diligentiam adhibeat. Hæc una circa Ens entium et Causam causarum, circa Principium naturæ, et gratiæ in natura existentis, naturæ adsistentis, et naturam circumsistentis, versatur. Dignissimum itaque hoc est Objectum et plenum venerandæ Majestatis, præcellensque reliquis.

ARMINIUS.

THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTES.

PART SECOND.

DOCTRINES OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, CONTINUED.

CHAPTER IV.

Attributes of God :—Omniscience.

THE omniscience of God is constantly connected in Scripture with his omnipresence, and forms a part of almost every description of that attribute ; for as God is a Spirit and therefore intelligent, if he is every where, if nothing can exclude him, not even the most solid bodies, nor the minds of intelligent beings, then are all things “naked and opened to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” “Where he acts, he is ; and where he is, he perceives.” “He understands and considers things absolutely, and as they are in their own natures, powers, properties, differences, together with all the circumstances belonging to them.”* “Known unto him are all his works from the beginning of the world,” rather *απ’ αιωνος*, “from all eternity ;” known before they were made, in their possible, and known, now they are made, in their actual, existence. “Lord, thou hast searched me and known me ; thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising, thou

* Bishop Wilkins’s Principles.

understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." "The darkness hideth not from thee ; but the night shineth as the day." "The ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings ; he searcheth their hearts, and understandeth every imagination of their thoughts." Nor is this perfect knowledge to be confined to men or angels ; it reaches into the state of the dead, and penetrates the regions of the damned. "Hell" (hades) "is naked before him ; and destruction" (the seats of destruction) "hath no covering." No limits at all are to be set to this perfection : "Great is the Lord, his understanding is infinite."

In Psalm xciv. the knowledge of God is argued from the communication of it to men : "Understand, ye brutish among the people ; and, ye fools, when will ye be wise ? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear ? He that formed the eye, shall he not see ? He that chastiseth the Heathen, shall not he correct ? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know ?" This argument is as easy as it is conclusive, obliging all who acknowledge a First Cause, to admit his perfect intelligence, or to take refuge in Atheism itself. It fetches not the proof from a distance, but refers us to our bosoms for the constant demonstration that the Lord is a God of knowledge, and that by him actions are weighed.

"We find in ourselves such qualities as thought and intelligence, power, and freedom, &c., for which we have the evidence of consciousness as much as for our own existence. Indeed, it is only by our consciousness of these, that our existence is known to ourselves. We know, likewise, that these are perfections, and that to have them is better than to be without them. We find also that they have not been in us from eternity. They must, therefore, have had a beginning, and, consequently, some cause, for the very same reason that a being beginning to exist in time requires a cause. Now this cause, as it must be superior to its effect, must have those perfections in a superior degree ; and if it be the First

Cause, it must have them in an infinite or unlimited degree, since bounds or limitations, without a limiter, would be an effect without a cause. ↓

“ If God gives wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to men of understanding, if he communicates this perfection to his creatures, the inference must be that he himself is possessed of it in a much more eminent degree than they; that his knowledge is deep and intimate, reaching to the very essence of things, theirs but slight and superficial; his clear and distinct, theirs confused and dark; his certain and infallible, theirs doubtful and liable to mistake; his easy and permanent, theirs obtained with much pains, and soon lost again by the defects of memory or age; his universal and extending to all objects, theirs short and narrow, reaching only to some few things, while that which is wanting cannot be numbered; and, therefore, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so, as the Prophet has told us, are his ways above their ways, and his thoughts above their thoughts.”*

But his understanding is infinite; a doctrine which the sacred writers not only authoritatively announce, but confirm by referring to the wisdom displayed in his works. The only difference between wisdom and knowledge is, that the former always supposes action, and action directed to an end. But wherever there is wisdom, there must be knowledge; and as the wisdom of God in the creation consists in the formation of things which, by themselves, or in combination with others, shall produce certain effects, and that in a variety of operation which is to us boundless, the previous knowledge of the possible qualities and effects inevitably supposes a knowledge which can have no limit. For as creation out of nothing argues a power which is omnipotent; so the knowledge of the possibilities of things which are not, (a knowledge which, from the effect, we are sure must exist in God,) argues that such a Being must be omniscient. ↓ For “all things being not only present to him, but also entirely depending upon him, and having received both their being itself, and all their powers

and faculties from him ; it is manifest that, as he knows all things that are, so he must likewise know all possibilities of things, that is, all effects that can be. For, being himself alone self-existent, and having alone given to all things all the powers and faculties they are endued with ; it is evident he must of necessity know perfectly what all and each of those powers and faculties, which are derived wholly from himself, can possibly produce ; and seeing, at one boundless view, all the possible compositions and divisions, variations and changes, circumstances and dependencies of things,—all their possible relations one to another, and their dispositions or fitnesses to certain and respective ends,—he must, without possibility of error, know exactly what is best and properest in every one of the infinite possible cases or methods of disposing things ; and understand perfectly how to order and direct the respective means, to bring about what he so knows to be, in its kind, or in the whole, the best and fittest in the end. This is what we mean by infinite wisdom.”

On the subject of the divine ubiquity and omniscience, many fine sentiments are found even among Pagans ; for, an intelligent First Cause being in any sense admitted, it was most natural and obvious to ascribe to him a perfect knowledge of all things. They acknowledged “ that nothing is hid from God, who is intimate to our minds, and mingles himself with our very thoughts ; ”* nor were they all unaware of the practical tendency of such a doctrine, and of the motive it affords to a cautious and virtuous conduct.† But among them it was not held, as by the sacred writers, in connexion with other correct views of the divine nature, which are essential to give to this its full moral effect. Not only on this subject does the manner in which the Scriptures state this doctrine far transcend that of the wisest pagan Theists ; but the moral of the sentiment is infinitely more comprehensive and impressive. With them it is connected with man’s state

* *Nihil Deo clausum, interest animis nostris, et mediis cogitationibus intervenit.*—SENECÆ *Epistolæ*.

† *Quis enim non timeat Deum, omnia pervidentem, et cogitantem, &c.*—CICERO *De Naturâ Deorum*.

of trial; with a holy law, all the violations of which, in thought, word, and deed, are both infallibly known, and strictly marked; with promises of grace, and of mild and protecting government as to all who have sought and found the mercy of God, forgiving their sins and admitting them into his family. The wicked are thus reminded, that their hearts are searched, and their sins noted; that the eyes of the Lord are upon their ways; and that their most secret works will be brought to light in the day when God, the Witness, shall become God the Judge. In like manner, "the eyes of the Lord" are said to be "over the righteous;" that such persons are kept by Him "who never slumbers or sleeps;" that he is never "far from them," and that "his eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in their behalf;" that foes, to them invisible, are seen by his eye, and controlled by his arm; and that this great attribute, so appalling to wicked men, affords to them, not only the most influential reason for a perfectly holy temper and conduct, but the strongest motive to trust, and joy, and hope, amidst the changes and afflictions of the present life. Socrates, as well as other philosophers, could express themselves well, so long as they expressed themselves generally, on this subject. The former could say, "Let your own frame instruct you. Does the mind inhabiting your body dispose and govern it with ease? Ought you not then to conclude, that the universal Mind with equal ease actuates and governs universal nature; and that, when you can at once consider the interests of the Athenians at home, in Egypt, and in Sicily, it is not too much for the divine Wisdom to take care of the universe? These reflections will soon convince you, that the greatness of the divine Mind is such, as at once to see all things, hear all things, be present every where, and direct all the affairs of the world." These views are just; but they wanted that connexion with others relative both to the divine nature and government, which we see only in the Bible, to render them influential; they neither gave correct moral distinctions nor led to a virtuous practice; no, not in Socrates, who, on some subjects, and especially on the personality of the Deity, and

his independence on matter, raised himself far above the rest of his philosophic brethren, but in moral feeling and practice was as censurable as they.*

The foreknowledge of God, or his prescience of future things, though contingent, is by Divines generally included in the term "omniscience;" and for this they have unquestionably the authority of the holy Scriptures. From the difficulty which has been supposed to exist, in reconciling this with the freedom of human actions, and man's accountability, some have, however, refused to allow prescience, at least of contingent actions, to be a property of the divine nature; and others have adopted various modifications of opinion, as to the knowledge of God, in order to elude or to remove the objection. This subject was glanced at in Part I., chap. 9; but in this place, where the omniscience of God is under consideration, the three leading theories which have been resorted to for the purpose of maintaining unimpugned the moral government of God, and

* Several parallels have been at different times drawn, even by Christian Divines, between the character of Socrates and Christ, doubtless with the intention of exalting the latter, but yet so as to veil the true character of the former. How great is the disgust one feels at that want of all moral delicacy from which only such comparisons could emanate, when the true character of Socrates comes to be unveiled! On a Sermon preached at Cambridge by Dr. Butler, which contains one of these parallels, The Christian Observer has the following just remarks:—

"We earnestly request that such of our readers as are sufficiently acquainted with classical literature to institute the examination, would turn to the eleventh chapter of the third book of the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon, and we are persuaded that they will not think our reprehension of Dr. Butler misplaced. The very title of the chapter, we should have thought, would have precluded any Christian scholar, much more any Christian Divine, from the possibility of being guilty of a profanation so gross and revolting. The title of it is, *Cum Meretrice Theodatâ de arte hominum alliciendorum disserit*. (Socrates, viz.) Doubtless many who heard Dr. Butler preach, and many more who have since read his Sermon, have taken it for granted, that when he ventured to recommend the conduct of Socrates, in associating with courtezans, as being an adumbration with that of our Saviour, he must have alluded to instances in the life of that philosopher of his having laboured to reclaim the vicious, or to console the penitent with the hope of pardon. For ourselves, we know of no such instances. But what will be his surprise to find that the intercourse of Socrates with courtezans, as it is here recorded by Xenophon, was of the most licentious and profligate description?"

the freedom and responsibility of man, seem to require examination, that the true doctrine of Scripture may be fully brought out and established.*

* There is another theory which was formerly much debated, under the name of *Scientia Media* ; but to which, in the present day, reference is seldom made. The knowledge of God was distributed into *necessary*, which goes before every act of the will in the order of nature, and by which he knows himself, and all possible things ;—*free*, which follows the act of the will, and by which God knows all things which he has decreed to do and to permit, as things which he wills to be done or permitted ;—*middle*, so called because partaking of the two former kinds, by which he knows, *sub conditione*, what men and angels would voluntarily do under any given circumstances. *Tertiam Mediam, quâ sub conditione novit quid homines aut angeli facturi essent pro suâ libertate, si cum his aut illis circumstantiis, in hoc vel in illo rerum ordine constituerentur.*—*EPISCOPIUS De Scientiâ Dei.* They illustrate this kind of knowledge by such passages as, “Woe unto thee, Chorazin ! woe unto thee, Bethsaida ! for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” This distinction, which was taken from the Jesuits, who drew it from the Schoolmen, was at least favoured by some of the Remonstrant Divines, as the extract from Episcopus shows ; and they seem to have been led to it by the circumstance, that almost all the high Calvinist theologians of that day entirely denied the possibility of contingent future actions being foreknown, in order to support on this ground their doctrine of absolute predestination. In this, however, those Remonstrants, who adopted that notion, did not follow their great leader Arminius, who felt no need of this subterfuge, but stood on the plain declarations of Scripture, unembarrassed with metaphysical distinctions. Gomarus, on the other side, adopted this opinion, which was confined, among the Calvinists of that day, to himself and another. Gomarus betook himself to this notion of conditional prescience, in order to avoid being charged with making God the author of the sin of Adam, and found it a convenient mode of eluding so formidable an objection, as Curcellæus remarks : *Sapienter ergò, meo judicio, Gomarus, cum suam de reprobationis objecto sententiam hoc absurdo videret urgeri, quod Deum peccati Adami auctorem constituerit, ad præscientiam conditionatam confugit, quâ Deus ex infinito scientiæ suæ lumine, quædam futura non absolutè, sed certâ conditione posita prænovit. Hac enim ratione commodissimè ictum istum declinavit. Eumque postea secutus est Wallæus in Locis suis Communibus ; qui etiam, feliciter scopulum illum prætervehitur. Nullum præterea ex Calvini discipulis novi, qui hanc in Deo scientiam agnoscat.—De Jure Dei.*

To what practical end this opinion went, it is not easy to see, either as to such of the Calvinists or of the Arminians as adopted it. The point of the question, after all, was, whether the actual circumstances in which a free agent would be placed, and his conduct accordingly, could both be foreknown. Gomarus, who adopted the view of conditional foreknowledge, as to Adam at

The Chevalier Ramsay, among his other speculations, holds "it a matter of choice in God, to think of finite ideas;" and similar opinions, though variously worded, have been occasionally adopted. In substance these opinions are, that, though the knowledge of God be infinite as his power is infinite, there is no more reason to conclude, that his knowledge should be always exerted to the full extent of its capacity, than that his power should be employed to the extent of his omnipotence; and that if we suppose him to choose not to know some contingencies, the infiniteness of his knowledge is not thereby impugned. To this it may be answered, that the infinite power of God is in Scripture represented, as in the nature of things it must be, as an infinite capacity, and not as infinite in act; but that the knowledge of God is on the contrary never represented there to us as a capacity to acquire knowledge, but as actually comprehending all things that are, and all things that can be. 2. That the notion of God's choosing to know some things, and not to know others, supposes a reason why he refuses to know any class of things or events, which reason, it would seem, can only arise out of their nature and circumstances, and, therefore, supposes at least a partial knowledge of them, from which the reason for his not choosing to know them arises. The doctrine is therefore somewhat contradictory. But, 3. It is fatal to this opinion, that it does not at all meet the difficulty arising out of the question of the congruity of divine prescience, and the free actions of man; since some contingent actions, for which men have been made accountable, we are sure, have been foreknown by God, because by his Spirit in the Prophets they were foretold; and if the freedom of man can in these cases be reconciled to the

least, conceded the liberty of the will, so far as the first man was concerned, to his opponents; but Episcopius and others conceded by this notion something of more importance to the Supralapsarians, who denied that the prescience of future contingencies was at all possible. However, both agreed to destroy the prescience of God as to actual contingencies, though the advocates of the *Media Scientia* reserved the point as to possible, or rather hypothetic, ones; and thus the whole was, after all, resolved into the wider question, "Is the knowledge of future contingencies possible?" This point will be presently considered.

prescience of God, there is no greater difficulty in any other case which can possibly occur.

A second theory is, that the foreknowledge of contingent events being in its own nature impossible, because it implies a contradiction, it does no dishonour to the divine Being to affirm, that of such events he has, and can have, no prescience whatever; and thus the prescience of God, as to moral actions, being wholly denied, the difficulty of reconciling it with human freedom and accountability has no existence.*

To this the same answer must be given as to the former. It does not meet the case, so long as the Scriptures are allowed to contain prophecies of rewardable and punishable actions.

That man is accountable to God for his conduct, and therefore free, that is, laid under no invincible necessity of acting in a given manner, are doctrines clearly contained in the Bible; and the notion of necessity has here its full and satisfactory reply: But if a difficulty should be felt in reconciling the freedom of an action with the prescience of it, it affords not the slightest relief to deny the foreknowledge of God as to actions in general, whilst the Scriptures contain predictions of the conduct of men whose actions cannot have been determined by invincible necessity, because they were actions for which they received from God a just and marked punishment. Whether the scheme of relief be, that the knowledge of God, like his power, is arbitrary; or that the prescience of contingencies is impossible; so long as the Scriptures are allowed to contain predictions of the conduct of men, good or bad, the difficulty remains in all its force. The whole body of prophecy is founded on the certain prescience of contingent actions, or it is not prediction, but guess and conjecture:—To such fearful results does the denial of the divine prescience lead! No one can deny that the Bible contains predictions of the rise and fall of several kingdoms; that Daniel, for instance, prophesied of the rise, the various fortune, and the

* So little effect has this theory in removing any difficulty, that persons of the most opposite theological sentiments have claimed it in their favour: Socinus and his followers, all the Supralapsarian Calvinists, and a few Arminians.

fall, of the celebrated monarchies of antiquity. But empires do not rise and fall wholly by immediate acts of God; they are not thrown up like new islands in the ocean, they do not fall like cities in an earthquake, by the direct exertion of divine power. They are carried through their various stages of advance and decline, by the virtues and the vices of men, which God makes the instruments of their prosperity or destruction. Counsels, wars, science, revolutions, all crowd in their agency; and the predictions are of the combined and ultimate results of all these circumstances, which, as arising out of the vices and virtues of men, out of innumerable acts of choice, are contingent. Seen they must have been through all their stages, and seen in their results; for prophecy has registered those results. The prescience of them cannot be denied, for that is on the record; and if certain prescience involves necessity, then are the daily virtues and vices of men not contingent. It was predicted, that Babylon should be taken by Cyrus in the midst of a midnight revel, in which the gates should be left unguarded and open. Now, if all the actions which arose out of the warlike disposition and ambition of Cyrus were contingent, what becomes of the principle, that it is impossible to foreknow contingencies?—they were foreknown, because the result of them was predicted. If the midnight revel of the Babylonian Monarch was contingent, (the circumstance which led to the neglect of the gates of the city,) that also was foreknown, because predicted. If not contingent, the actions of both Monarchs were necessary, and to neither of them can be ascribed virtue or vice.

Our Lord predicts, most circumstantially, the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. If this be allowed, then the contingencies involved in the conduct of the Jews, who provoked that fatal war, in the Roman Senate who decreed it, in the Roman Generals who carried it on, in the Roman and Jewish soldiers who were engaged in it, were all foreseen, and the result of them predicted; if they were not contingencies, that is, if they were not free actions, then the virtues and vices of both parties, and all the acts of skill, and courage, and

enterprise ; and all the cruelties and sufferings of the besieged and the besiegers, arising out of innumerable volitions, and giving rise to the events so circumstantially marked in the prophecy, were determined by an irreversible necessity. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah predicts, that Messiah should be taken away by a violent death, inflicted by men in defiance of all the principles of justice. The record cannot be blotted out ; and if the conduct of the Jews was not, as the advocates of this scheme will contend it was not, influenced by necessity, then we have all the contingencies of their hatred, and cruelties, and injustice predicted, and therefore foreknown. The same observations might be applied to St. Paul's prediction of a "falling away" in the church ; of the rise of the "man of sin ;" and, in a word, to every prediction which the sacred volume contains. If there be any predictions in the Bible at all, every scheme which denies the prescience of contingencies must compel us into the doctrine of necessity, which in this place it is not necessary to discuss.

On the main principle of the theory just mentioned,—that the prescience of contingent events is impossible, because their nature would be destroyed by it,—we may add a few remarks. That the subject is incomprehensible as to the manner in which the divine Being foreknows future events of this or of any kind, even the greatest minds which have applied themselves to such speculations have felt and acknowledged. The fact that such a property exists in the divine Nature is, however, too clearly stated in Scripture to allow of any doubt in those who are disposed to submit to its authority ; and it is not left to the uncertainty of our speculations on the properties of spiritual natures either to be confirmed or disproved. Equally clear is it that the moral actions of men are not necessitated, because human accountability is the main pillar of that moral government whose principles, conduct, and ends are stated so largely in divine revelation. Whatever, therefore, becomes of human speculations, these points are sufficiently settled, on an authority which is abundantly sufficient. To the objection of metaphysicians of different classes against either of these principles, that such is not the sense of the Scriptures,

because the fact "cannot be so, it involves a contradiction," not the least importance is to be attached, when the plain, concurrent, and uniform sense of Scripture, interpreted as any other book would be interpreted, determines to the contrary. It surely does not follow that a thing cannot be because men do not see, or pretend not to see, that it can be; this would lay the foundation of our faith in the strength or weakness of other men's intellect. We are not, however, in many cases, left wholly to this answer; and it may be shown that the position, "Certain prescience destroys contingency," is a mere sophism; and that this conclusion is connected with the premiss by a confused use of terms.

The great fallacy in the argument that the certain prescience of a moral action destroys its contingent nature, lies in supposing that contingency and certainty are the opposites of each other. It is, perhaps, unfortunate that a word which is of figurative etymology, and which, consequently, can only have an ideal application to such subjects, should have grown into common use in this discussion, because it is more liable, on that account, to present itself to different minds under different shades of meaning. If, however, the term "contingent" in this controversy has any definite meaning at all, as applied to the moral actions of men, it must mean their freedom, and stands opposed not to certainty, but to necessity. A free action is a voluntary one; and an action which results from the choice of the agent is distinguished from a necessary one in this, that it might not have been, or have been otherwise, according to the self-determining power of the agent. It is with reference to this specific quality of a free action that the term "contingency" is used; it might have been otherwise, in other words, it was not necessitated. Contingency in moral actions is, therefore, their freedom, and is opposed not to certainty, but to necessity: The very nature of this controversy fixes this as the precise meaning of the term. The question is not, in point of fact, about the certainty of moral actions, that is, whether they will happen or not; but about the nature of them, whether free or constrained, whether they must happen or not. Those who advocate this theory care not

about the certainty* of actions, simply considered, that is, whether they will take place or not; the reason why they object to a certain prescience of moral actions is this, they conclude that such a prescience renders them necessary; it is the quality of the action for which they contend, not whether it will happen or not. If "contingency" meant "uncertainty," the sense in which such theorists take it, the dispute would be at an end. But though an uncertain action cannot be foreseen as certain, a free, unnecessitated action may; for there is nothing in the knowledge of the action in the least to affect its nature. Simple knowledge is, in no sense, a cause of action, nor can it be conceived to be causal, unconnected with exerted power; for mere knowledge, therefore, an action remains free or necessitated, as the case may be. A necessitated action is not made a voluntary one by its being foreknown; a free action is not made a necessary one. Free actions foreknown will not, therefore, cease to be contingent. But how stands the case as to their certainty? Precisely on the same ground. The certainty of a necessary action foreknown does not result from the knowledge of the action, but from the operation of the necessitating cause; and, in like manner, the certainty of a free action does not result from the knowledge of it, which is no cause at all, but from the voluntary cause, that is, the determination of the will. It alters not the case in the least to say, that the voluntary action might have been otherwise: Had it been otherwise the knowledge of it would have been otherwise; but as the will which gives birth to the action is not dependent upon the previous knowledge of God, but the knowledge of the action upon foresight of the choice of the will, neither the will nor the act is controlled by the knowledge; and the action, though foreseen, is still free or contingent.

The foreknowledge of God has, then, no influence upon

* Certainty is, properly speaking, no quality of an action at all, unless it be taken in the sense of a fixed and necessitated action. In this controversy it means the certainty which the mind that foresees has, that an action will be done; and the certainty is, therefore, in the mind, and not in the action.

either the freedom or the certainty of actions, for this plain reason, that it is knowledge, and not influence; and actions may be certainly foreknown without their being rendered necessary by that foreknowledge. But here it is said, "If the result of an absolute contingency be certainly foreknown, it can have no other result, it cannot happen otherwise." This is not the true inference: It will not happen otherwise; but I ask, "Why can it not happen otherwise?" "Can" is an expression of potentiality, it denotes power or possibility. The objection is, that it is not possible that the action should otherwise happen. But why not? What deprives it of that power? If a necessary action were in question, it could not otherwise happen than as the necessitating cause shall compel; but then, that would arise from the necessitating cause solely, and not from the prescience of the action, which is not causal. But if the action be free, and it enter into the very nature of a voluntary action to be unconstrained, then it might have happened in a thousand other ways, or not have happened at all; the foreknowledge of it no more affects its nature in this case than in the other. All its potentiality, so to speak, still remains, independent of foreknowledge, which neither adds to its power of happening otherwise, nor diminishes it. But then we are told that "the prescience of it, in that case, must be uncertain:" Not unless any person can prove that the divine prescience is unable to dart through all the workings of the human mind, all its comparison of things in the judgment, all the influences of motives on the affections, all the hesitations and haltings of the will, to its final choice. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for us," but it is the knowledge of Him "who understandeth the thoughts of man afar off."

"But if a contingency will have a given result, to that result it must be determined." Not in the least. We have seen that it cannot be determined to a given result by mere precognition; for we have evidence in our own minds that mere knowledge is not causal to the actions of another. It is determined to its result by the will of the agent; but even in that case it cannot be said that it must be determined to that result, because it is of the nature of freedom to be uncon-

strained : So that here we have an instance, in the case of a free agent, that he will act in some particular manner ; but it by no means follows from what will be, whether foreseen or not, that it must be.

On this subject, so much controverted, and on which so much, in the way of logical consequence, depends, I add a few authorities :—

Dr. S. Clarke observes : “ They who suppose that events which are called contingent cannot be certainly foreknown, must likewise suppose that when there is not a chain of necessary causes there can be no certainty of any future events : But this is a mistake ; for let us suppose that there is in man a power of beginning motion, and of acting with what has, of late, been called ‘ philosophical freedom ;’ and let us suppose, farther, that the actions of such a man cannot possibly be foreknown ; will there not yet be in the nature of things, notwithstanding this supposition, the same certainty of event in every one of the man’s actions as if they were ever so fatal and necessary ? For instance, suppose the man, by an internal principle of motion, and an absolute freedom of mind, to do some particular action to-day ; and suppose it was not possible that this action should have been foreseen yesterday ; was there not, nevertheless, the same certainty of event as if it had been foreseen, and absolutely necessary ? that is, would it not have been as certain a truth yesterday, and from eternity, that this action was an event to be performed to-day, notwithstanding the supposed freedom, as it is now a certain and infallible truth that it is performed ? Mere certainty of event, therefore, does not, in any measure, imply necessity. And surely it implies no contradiction to suppose that every future event which, in the nature of things, is now certain, may now be certainly known by that intelligence which is omniscient. The manner how God can foreknow future events without a chain of necessary causes, it is, indeed, impossible for us to explain ; yet some sort of general notion of it we may conceive. For, as a man who has no influence over another person’s actions can yet often perceive beforehand what that other will do ; and a wiser and more expe-

rienced man, with still greater probability, will foresee what another, with whose disposition he is perfectly acquainted, will, in certain circumstances do ; and an angel, with still less degree of error, may have a further prospect into men's future actions ; so it is very reasonable to conceive that God, without influencing men's wills by his power, or subjecting them to a chain of necessary causes, cannot but have a knowledge of future free events, as much more certain than men or angels can possibly have, as the perfection of his nature is greater than that of theirs. The distinct manner how he foresees these things we cannot, indeed, explain ; but neither can we explain the manner of numberless other things, of the reality of which, however, no man entertains a doubt."

Dr. Copleston judiciously remarks :—

" The course, indeed, of the material world seems to proceed upon such fixed and uniform laws, that short experience joined to close attention is sufficient to enable a man, for all useful purposes, to anticipate the general result of causes now in action. In the moral world much greater uncertainty exists. Every one feels, that what depends upon the conduct of his fellow-creatures is less certain, than what is to be brought about by the agency of the laws of matter ; and yet even here, since man is a being of a certain composition, having such and such faculties, inclinations, affections, desires, and appetites, it is very possible for those who study his nature attentively, especially for those who have practical experience of any individual or of any community of men, to foretel how they will be affected, and how they will act, under any supposed circumstances. The same power (in an unlimited degree as before) it is natural and reasonable to ascribe to that Being who excels the wisest of us infinitely more than the wisest of us excels his fellow-creatures.

" It never enters the mind of a person who reflects in this way, that his anticipation of another's conduct lays any restraint upon that man's conduct when he comes to act. The anticipation, indeed, is relative to himself, not to the other. If it affected him in the remotest degree, his conduct would vary in proportion to the strength of the conviction in the

mind of the thinker that he will so act. But no man really believes in this magical sympathy. No man supposes the certainty of the event (to use a common but, as I conceive, an improper term) to correspond at all with the certainty of him who foretels or expects it. In fact, every day's experience shows, that men are deceived in the event, even when they regarded themselves as most certain, and when they would readily have used the strongest phrases to denote that certainty, not from any intention to deceive, but from an honest persuasion that such an event must happen. How is it then? God can never be deceived; his knowledge, therefore, is always accompanied or followed by the event; and yet if we get an idea of what his knowledge is, by our own, why should we regard it as dragging the event along with it, when in our own case we acknowledge the two things to have no connexion?

“ But here the advocate for necessity interposes, and says, ‘ True, your knowledge does not affect the event over which you have no power; but God, who is all-powerful, who made all things as they are, and who knows all that will come to pass, must be regarded as rendering that necessary which he foreknows; just as even you may be considered accessory to the event which you anticipate, exactly in proportion to the share you have had in preparing the instruments or forming the minds of those who are to bring it about.’

“ To this I answer, that the connexion between knowledge and the event is not at all established by this argument. It is not because I knew what would follow, but because I contributed towards it, that it is influenced by me. You may, if you please, contend that, because God made every thing, therefore all things that happen are done by him. This is taking another ground for the doctrine of necessity, which will be considered presently. All I maintain now is, that the notion of God's foreknowledge ought not to interfere, in the slightest degree, with our belief in the contingency of events, and the freedom of human actions. The confusion has, I conceive, arisen chiefly from the ambiguity of the word ‘ certainty,’ used as it is even by learned writers, both in its

relation to the mind which thinks, and to the object about which it is thinking.”*

To the above I add a passage from a Divine of much older date, who has stated the argument with admirable clearness :—

In answer to the common argument, “As a thing is, such is the knowledge of it: Future contingencies are uncertain; therefore they cannot be known as certain,” he observes, “It is wonderful that acute minds should not have detected the fallacy of this paralogism. For the major, which is vaunted as an axiom of undoubted truth, is most false unless it be properly explained. For if a thing is evil, shall the knowledge of it be evil? Then neither God nor angels could know the sins of men, without sinning themselves. Again: Should a thing be necessary, will the knowledge of it, on that account, be also necessary? But many things are necessary in the nature of things, which either are unknown to us, or only known doubtfully. Many persons doubt even the existence of God, which in the highest sense is necessary, so far are they from having a necessary knowledge of him. That proposition, therefore, is only true in this sense,—that our knowledge must agree with the things which are known, and that we know them as they are in reality, and not otherwise. Thus I ought to think, that the paper on which I write is white and the ink black; for if I fancy the ink white, and the paper black, this is not knowledge but ignorance, or rather deception. In like manner true knowledge ought to regard things necessary as necessary, and things contingent as contingent; but it requires not that necessary things should be known necessarily, and contingent things contingently; for the contrary often happens.

“But the minor of the above syllogism is ambiguous and improper. The things about which our minds are exercised, are in themselves neither certain nor uncertain. They are called so only in respect of him who knows them; but they themselves are necessary or contingent. But if you under-

* Inquiry into Necessity, &c.

stand by a certain thing, a necessary one, and by an uncertain thing, that which is contingent, as many by an abuse of terms do, then your minor will appear to be identical and nugatory, for it will stand, 'Future contingencies are contingent,' from which no conclusion can be drawn. It is to be concluded, that certitude and incertitude are not affections of the things which are or may be known, but of the intellect of him who has knowledge of them, and who forms different judgments respecting them. For one and the same thing, without any change in itself, may be certain and uncertain at the same time : Certain, indeed, to him who knows it certainly ; but to him who knows it not, uncertain. For example, the same future eclipse of the sun shall be certain to a skilful astronomer who has calculated it, uncertain to him who is ignorant of the laws of the heavenly bodies. But that cannot be said concerning the necessity and contingency of things. They remain such as they are in their own nature, whether we know them or not ; for an eclipse, which from the laws of nature must necessarily take place, is not made contingent by my ignorance and uncertainty whether it will or will not happen. For this reason they are mistaken who say, that things, determined by the decree of God, are necessary in respect of God ; but that to us, who know not his decrees, they are contingent ; for our ignorance cannot make that which is future and necessary, because God hath decreed it, change its nature and become contingent. It is no contradiction, indeed, to say, that one and the same thing may be at once necessary and yet uncertain ; but that it should be necessary and contingent is a manifest contradiction. To God, therefore, whose knowledge is infinite, future contingencies are indeed certain, but to angels and men uncertain ; nor are they made necessary because God knows them certainly. The knowledge of God influences nothing extrinsically, nor changes the nature of things in anywise. He knows future necessary things as necessary, but contingencies as contingencies ; otherwise he would not know them truly, but be deceived, which cannot happen to God." *

The rudiments of the third theory which this controversy has called forth, may be found in many theological writers, ancient and modern ; but it is stated at large in the writings of Archbishop King, and requires some notice, because the views of that writer have of late been again made a subject of controversy. They amount, in brief, to this, that the foreknowledge of God must be supposed to differ so much from any thing of the kind which we perceive in ourselves, and from any ideas which we can possibly form of that property of the divine nature, that no argument respecting it can be grounded upon our imperfect notions ; and that all controversy on subjects connected with it is idle and fruitless.

In establishing this view, Archbishop King, in his Sermon on Divine Predestination and Foreknowledge, has the following observations :—

“ It is in effect agreed on all hands, that the nature of God is incomprehensible by human understanding ; and not only his nature, but likewise his powers and faculties, and the ways and methods in which he exercises them, are so far beyond our reach, that we are utterly incapable of framing exact and adequate notions of them.

“ We ought to remember, that the descriptions which we frame to ourselves of God, or of the divine attributes, are not taken from any direct or immediate perceptions that we have of him or them ; but from some observations we have made of his works, and from the consideration of those qualifications, that we conceive would enable us to perform the like.

“ It doth truly follow from hence, that God must either have these or other faculties equivalent to them, and adequate to these mighty effects which proceed from them. And because we do not know what his faculties are in themselves, we give them the names of those powers that we find would be necessary to us in order to produce such effects, and call them wisdom, understanding, and foreknowledge ; yet at the same time we cannot but be sensible that they are of a nature altogether different from ours, and that we have no direct and proper notion or conception of them. Only we are sure, that

they have effects like unto those that proceed from wisdom, understanding, and foreknowledge in us; and that when our works fail to resemble them in any particular, it is by reason of some defect in these qualifications.

“Thus our reason teaches us to ascribe these attributes to God, by way of analogy to such qualities as we find most valuable in ourselves.

“If we look into the holy Scriptures, and consider the representations given us there of God or his attributes, we shall find them plainly borrowed from some resemblance to things, with which we are acquainted by our senses. Thus when the holy Scriptures speak of God, they ascribe hands, and eyes, and feet to him: Not that we should believe, he has any of these members, according to the literal signification; but the meaning is, that he has a power to execute all those acts, to the effecting of which these parts in us are instrumental: That is, he can converse with men, as well as if he had a tongue and mouth; he can discern all that we do or say, as perfectly as if he had eyes and ears; he can reach us as well as if he had hands and feet; he has as true and substantial a being, as if he had a body; and he is as truly present every where as if that body were infinitely extended.

“After the same manner, we find him represented as affected with such passions as we perceive to be in ourselves, namely, as angry and pleased, as loving and hating, as repenting and changing his resolutions, as full of mercy and provoked to revenge. And yet on reflection we cannot think, that any of these passions literally affect the divine nature.

“And as the passions of men are thus by analogy ascribed to God, because these would be in us the principles of such outward actions, as we see he has performed; so, by the same condescension to the weakness of our capacities, we find the powers and operations of our minds ascribed to him.

“The use of foreknowledge with us, is to prevent any surprise when events happen, and that we may not be at a loss what to do by things coming upon us unawares. Now

inasmuch as we are certain that nothing can surprise God, and that he can never be at a loss what to do ; we conclude that God has a faculty to which our foreknowledge bears some analogy ; therefore we call it by that name.

“ But it does not follow from hence that any of these are literally in God, after the manner they are in us, any more than hands or eyes, than love or hatred, are ; on the contrary, we must acknowledge, that those things, which we call by these names, when attributed to God, are of so very different a nature from what they are in us, and so superior to all that we can conceive, that in reality there is no more likeness between them, than between our hand and God’s power. Nor can we draw consequences from the real nature of one to that of the other, with more justness of reason, than we can conclude, because our hand consists of fingers and joints, therefore the power of God is distinguished by such parts.

“ So that to argue, ‘ Because foreknowledge, as it is in us, if supposed infallible, cannot consist with the contingency of events, therefore what we call so in God cannot,’ is as far from reason, as it would be to conclude, Because our eyes cannot see in the dark, therefore, when God is said to see all things, his eyes must be enlightened with a perpetual sunshine ; or, Because we cannot love or hate without passion, therefore, when the Scriptures ascribe these to God, they teach us, that he is liable to these affections as we are.

“ We ought, therefore, to interpret all these things, when attributed to God, only by way of condescension to our capacities, in order to help us to conceive what we are to expect from him, and what duty we are to pay him. Particularly, the terms of ‘ foreknowledge,’ ‘ predestination,’ nay, of ‘ understanding,’ and ‘ will,’ when ascribed to him, are not to be taken strictly or properly, nor are we to think that they are in him in the same sense that we find them in ourselves ; on the contrary, we are to interpret them only by way of analogy and comparison.”

These views have recently been advocated by Dr. Copleston, in his *Inquiry into the Doctrines of Necessity and Predestination* ; but to this theory, the first objection is, that, like the

former, it does not, in the least, relieve the difficulty, for the entire subduing of which it was adopted.

For though foreknowledge in God should be admitted to be something of a "very different nature" from the same quality in man, yet, as it is represented as something equivalent to foreknowledge, whatever that something may be; as, in consequence of it, prophecies have actually been uttered and fulfilled, and of such a kind, too, as relate to actions for which men have in fact been held accountable; all the original difficulty of reconciling contingent events to this something, of which human foreknowledge is a "kind of shadow," as "a map of China is to China itself," remains in full force. The difficulty is shifted, but not removed; it cannot even be with more facility slid past; and either the Christian world must be content to forego all inquiries into these subjects,—a consummation not to be expected, however it may be wished,—or the contest must be resumed on another field, with no advantage from better ground or from broader daylight.

A further objection to these notions is, that they are dangerous. For if it be true, that the faculties we ascribe to God are "of a nature altogether different from our own, and that we have no direct and proper notion or conception of them;" then, in point of fact, we have no proper revelation at all of the nature of God, and of his attributes, in the Scriptures; and what we esteem to be such is a revelation of terms to which we can attach no "proper notion." If this conclusion be well founded, then it is so monstrous, that the premises on which it hangs must be unsound and anti-scriptural. This alone is a sufficient general refutation of the hypothesis; but a more particular examination will show, that it rests upon false assumptions; and that it introduces gratuitous difficulties, not called for by the supposed difficulty of reconciling the foreknowledge of God with the freedom of human actions.

1. It is assumed, that the descriptions which we frame to ourselves of God are taken from the observations we have made on his works, and from the consciousness of those qualifications which, we conceive, would enable us to perform the like. This might be, in part, true of Heathens left without

the light of revelation ; but it is not true of those who enjoy that advantage. Our knowledge of God comes from the Scriptures, which are taught to us in our infancy, and with which, either by reading or hearing, we become familiar as we grow up. The notions we have of God, so far as they agree with the Scriptures, are, therefore, not those which we have framed by the process assumed by the Archbishop, but those which have been declared to us in the Scriptures by God himself, as descriptions of his own nature. This makes a great difference. Our own modes of forming conceptions of the divine nature would have no authority higher than ourselves ; the announcements of Scripture are the word of God, communicating by human language the truth and reality of things, as to himself. This is the constant profession of the sacred writers ; they tell us, not what there is in man which may support an analogy between man and God, but what God is in himself.

2. It is assumed, that, because the nature of God is “incomprehensible,” we have no “proper notion or conception of it.” The term “proper notion” is vague. It may mean “an exact and adequate notion,” which it may be granted without hesitation that we have not ; or it may mean a notion correct and true in itself, though not complete and comprehensive. A great part of the fallacy lies here. To be incomprehensible, is not, in every case, and assuredly not in this, to be unintelligible. We may know God, though we cannot fully know him ; and our notions may be true, though not adequate ; and they must be true, if we have rightly understood God’s revelation of himself. Of being, for instance, we can form a true notion, because we are conscious of our own existence ; and though we cannot extend the conception to absolute being or self-existence, because our being is a dependent one, we can yet supply the defect, as we are taught by the Scriptures, by the negative notion of independence. Of spirit we have a true notion, and understand, therefore, what is meant when it is said that “God is a Spirit ;” and though we can have but an imperfect conception of an infinite Spirit, we can supply that want also, to all practical purposes, by the negative process of removing all imperfection, or limit of excellence, from

our views of the divine nature. We have a true notion of the presence of one being with other beings, and with place ; and though we cannot comprehend the mode in which God is omnipresent, we are able to conceive, without difficulty, the fact, that the divine presence fills all things. We have true notions of power and knowledge ; and can suppose them infinite ; though how they should be so we know not. And as to the moral attributes, such as truth, justice, and goodness, we have not only true, but comprehensive, and, for any thing that appears to the contrary, adequate, notions of them ; for our difficulties as to these attributes do not arise from any incapacity to conceive of what is perfect truth, perfect justice, and perfect goodness, but from our inability to show how many things, which occur in the divine government, are to be reconciled to these attributes ; and that, not because our notions of the attributes themselves are obscure, but because the things, out of which such questions arise, are either in themselves, or in their relations, but partially understood or greatly mistaken. Job and his friends did not differ in abstract views of the justice of the moral government of God, but in reconciling Job's afflictions with it.

3. It is assumed that the nature of God is essentially different from the spiritual nature of man. This is not the doctrine of Scripture. When it says that " God is a Spirit," we have no reason to conclude that a distant analogy, such a one as springs out of mere relation, which, in a poetic imagination, might be sufficient to support a figure of speech, is alone intended. The very argument connected with these words in the discourse of our Lord with the woman of Samaria forbids this. It is a declaration of the nature of God, and of the worship suited to his nature ; and the word employed is that by which both Jews and Samaritans had been taught by the same inspired records, which they each possessed, to designate and conceive of the intellectual nature of man. The nature of God and the nature of man are not the same ; but they are similar, because they bear many attributes in common, though, on the part of the divine nature, in a degree of perfection infinitely exceeding. The difference of degree, however,

cannot prove a difference of essence,—no, nor the circumstance that one has attributes which the other has not,—in any sense of the word “difference” which could be of service to the advocates of this hypothesis. But if a total difference is proved as to the intellectual attributes of God and men, that difference must be extended to the moral attributes also; and so the very foundation of morals and religion would be undermined. This point was successfully pressed by Edwards against Archbishop King; and it is met very feebly by Dr. Copleston. “Edwards,” he observes, “raises a clamour about the moral attributes, as if their nature also must be held to be different in kind from human virtues, if the knowledge of God be admitted to be different in kind from ours.” Certainly, this follows from the principles laid down by Archbishop King; and if his followers take his conclusions as to the intellectual attributes, they must take them as to the moral attributes also. If the faculties of God be of a nature altogether different from ours, we have no more reason to except from this rule the truth and the justice, than the wisdom and the prescience, of God; and the reasoning of Archbishop King is as conclusive in the one case as in the other.

The fallacy of the above assumptions is sufficient to destroy the hypothesis which has been built upon them; and the argument from Scripture may be shown to be as unfounded. It is, as the above extract will show, in brief, this, that as the Scriptures ascribe, by analogy, hands, and eyes, and feet to God, and also the passions of love, hatred, anger, &c.,—“because these would be in us the principles of such outward actions as we see he has performed,—so, by the same condescension to the weakness of our capacities, we find the powers and operations of our minds ascribed to him.” But will the advocates of this opinion look steadily to its legitimate consequences? We believe not; and those consequences must, therefore, be its total refutation. For if both our intellectual and moral affections are made use of but as distant analogies, and obscure intimations, to convey to us an imperfect knowledge of the intellectual powers and affections of the divine nature, in the same manner as human hands and human eyes

are made to represent his power and his knowledge ; it follows that there is nothing in the divine nature which answers more truly and exactly to knowledge, justice, truth, mercy, and other qualities in man, than the knowledge of God answers to human organs of vision, or his power to the hands or the feet ; and from this it would follow, that nothing is said in the Scriptures of the divine Being but what is, in the highest sense, figurative, and purely metaphorical. We are no more like God in our minds than in our bodies ; and it might as truly have been said with respect to man's bodily shape as to his mental faculties, that man was made "in the image of God."*

• "Though his Grace rightly lays down analogy for the foundation of his discourse, yet, for want of having thoroughly weighed and digested it, and by wording himself incautiously, he seems entirely to destroy the nature of it ; insomuch that whilst he rejects the strict propriety of our conceptions and words on the one hand, he appears to his antagonists to run into an extreme even below metaphor on the other.

"His greatest mistake is, that, through his discourse, he supposes the members and actions of a human body, which we attribute to God in a pure metaphor, to be equally upon the same foot of analogy with the passions of a human soul, which are attributed to him in a lower and more imperfect degree of analogy ; and even with the operations and perfections of the pure mind or intellect, which are attributed to him in a yet higher and more complete degree. In pursuance of this oversight, he expressly asserts love and anger, wisdom and goodness, knowledge and foreknowledge, and all the other divine attributes, to be spoken of God as improperly as eyes or ears ; that there is no more likeness between these things in the divine nature and in ours than there is between our hand and God's power ; and that they are not to be taken in the same sense.

"Agreeably to this incautious and indistinct manner of treating a subject curious and difficult, he hath unwarily dropped some such shocking expressions as these, 'The best representations we can make of God are infinitely short of truth.' Which God forbid, in the sense his adversaries. take it ; for then all our reasonings concerning him would be groundless and false. But the saying is evidently true in a favourable and qualified sense and meaning ; namely, that they are infinitely short of the real, true, internal nature of God as he is in himself. Again, that 'they are emblems, indeed, and parabolical figures of the divine attributes, which they are designed to signify ;' as if they were signs or figures of our own, altogether precarious and arbitrary, and without any real and true foundation of analogy between them, in the nature of either God or man. And, accordingly, he unhappily describes the knowledge we have of God and his attributes by the notion we form of a strange country by a map, which is only paper and ink, strokes and lines."—BISHOP BROWNE'S *Procedure of Human Understanding*.

It is also to be observed, that when the Scriptures speak of the knowledge, power, and other attributes of God in figurative language, taken from the eyes, or hands of the body, it is sufficiently obvious that this language is metaphorical, not only from the reason of things itself, but because the same ideas are also quite as often expressed without figure; and the metaphor, therefore, never misleads us. We have sufficient proof, also, that it never did mislead the Jews, even in the worst periods of their history, and when their tendency to idolatry and gross superstition was most powerful. They made images, in human shape, of other gods, but never of Jehovah; the Jews were never anthropomorphites, whatever they might be beside. But it is equally certain that they did give a literal interpretation to those passages in their Scriptures which speak of the knowledge, justice, mercy, &c., of God as the same in kind, though infinitely higher in their degree of excellence, with the same qualities in men. The reason is obvious: They could not interpret those passages of their holy writings which speak of the hands, the eyes, and the feet of God, literally, because every part of the same sacred revelation was full of representations of the divine nature, which declared his absolute spirituality; and they could not interpret those passages figuratively which speak of the intellectual and moral qualities of God in terms that express the same qualities in men, because their whole revelation did not furnish them with any hint, even the most distant, that there was a more literal or exact sense in which they could be taken. It was not possible for any man to take literally that sublimely-figurative representation of the upholding and ruling power of God, where he is said to "hold the waters of the ocean in the hollow of his hand," unless he could also conclude that where he is said to "weigh the hills in scales, and the mountains in a balance," he was to understand this literally also. The idea suggested is that of sustaining, regulating, and adjusting power; but if he were told that he ought to take the idea of power in as figurative a sense as that of the waters being held in the hollow of the hand of God, and of his weighing the mountains in scales, he would find it

impossible to form any idea at all of the thing signified ; the first step in the attempt would plunge him into total darkness. The figurative hand assists him to form the idea of managing and controlling power, but the figurative power suggests nothing ; and so this scheme blots out entirely all revelation of God of any kind, by resolving the whole into figures that represent nothing of which we can form any conception.

The argument of Archbishop King from the passions which are ascribed to God in Scripture, is not more conclusive : “ After the same manner we find him represented as affected with such passion as we perceive to be in ourselves, as angry and pleased, as loving and hating, as repenting and changing his resolutions, as full of mercy and provoked to revenge ; and yet, on reflection, we cannot think that any of these passions literally affect the divine nature.” But why not ? As they are represented in Scripture to be affections of the divine nature, and not in the gross manner in which they are expressed in this extract, there seems nothing improper in taking them literally ; and no necessity is made out to compel us to understand them to signify somewhat for which we have not a name, and of which we can form no idea. The Scriptures nowhere warrant us to consider God as a cold metaphysical abstraction ; and they nowhere indicate to us that when they ascribe affections to him, they are to be taken as mere figures of speech ; on the contrary, they teach us to consider them as answering substantially, though not circumstantially, to the innocent affections of men and angels. Why may not anger be literally ascribed to God ; not, indeed, as it may be caricatured to suit a theory, but as we find it ascribed in the Scriptures ? It is not malignant anger, nor blind, stormy, and disturbing anger, which is spoken of ; nor is this always, nor need it be at any time, the anger of creatures. There is an anger which is without sin in man ; “ a perception of evil, and opposition to it ; and also an emotion of mind, a sensation, or passion suitable thereto.”* There was

this in our Lord, who was without sin ; nor is it represented by the Evangelists who give us the instances as even an infirmity of the nature he assumed. In God it may be allowed to exist in a different manner from that in which it is found even in men who are “angry, and sin not ;” it is accompanied with no weakness, it is allied to no imperfection ; but that it does exist as truly in him as in man, is the doctrine of Scripture ; and there is no perfection ascribed to God to which it can be proved contrary, or with which we cannot conceive it to co-exist.* Not only anger, we are told, is ascribed to God, but the being pleased. Let the term used be “complacency,” instead of one which seems to have been selected to convey a notion of a lower and less worthy kind, and there is no incongruity in the idea. He is the blessed or happy God, and therefore capable of pleasure. He looked upon his works, and saw that they were good, “very good ;” words which suggest the idea of his complacency upon their completion ; and this, when separated from all connexion with human infirmity, appears to be a perfection, and not a defect. To be incapable of complacency and delight is the character of the supreme being of Epicurus, and of the modern Hindoos ; of whose internal state, so to speak, deep sleep, and the surface of an unruffled lake, are favourite figurative representations. But of this refinement we have nothing in the Bible, nor is it in the least necessary to our idea of infinite perfection. And why should not love exist in God in more than a figurative sense ? For this affection to be accompanied with perturba-

* Melancthon says, “‘The Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him ; and I [Moses] prayed for Aaron also at the same time.’” (Deut. ix. 20.) Let us not elude the exceedingly-lamentable expressions which the Holy Ghost employs when he says, ‘God was very angry ;’ and let us not feign to ourselves a god of stone, or a Stoical deity. For though God is angry in a different manner from men, yet let us conclude that God was really angry with Aaron ; and that Aaron was not then in [a state of] grace, but obnoxious to everlasting punishment. Dreadful was the fall of Aaron, who had, through fear, yielded to the madness of the people, when they instituted the Egyptian worship. Being warned by this example, let us not confirm ourselves in security, but acknowledge that it is possible for elect and renewed persons horribly to fall,” &c.—*Loci Præcip. Theol.*, 1543.

tion, anxiety, and weak or irrational partiality, is a mere accident: So we often see it in human beings; but though this affection, without any concurrent infirmity, be ascribed to God, it surely does not follow that it exists in him as something in nature wholly different from love in wise and holy creatures, in angels and in saints. Not only the beauty, the force, and the encouragement of a thousand passages of Scripture would be lost upon this hypothesis, but their meaning also. Love in God is something, we are told, which is so called because it produces similar effects to those which are produced by love in man; but what this something is we are not informed; and the revelation of Scripture as to God is thus reduced to a revelation of his acts only, but not, in the least, of the principles from which they flow.*

The same observations may be applied to “mercy and revenge;” by the latter of which the Archbishop can mean nothing more than judicial vengeance, or retribution, though an equivocal term has been adopted, *ad captandum*. “Repenting and changing his resolutions,” are improperly placed among the affections; but, freed from ideas of human infirmity, they may be, without the least dishonour to the fulness of the divine perfections, ascribed to God in as literal a sense as

* “It would destroy the confidence of prayer, and the ardour of devotion, if we could regard the Deity as subsisting by himself, and as having no sympathies, but mere abstract relations to the whole family in heaven and earth; and I look upon it as one of the most rational and philosophical confutations of your system, that it is fitted neither for the theory nor the practice of our religion; and that, if we could adopt it, we must henceforth exchange the language of Scripture for the anthems of Epicurus:—

*Omnis enim per se Divum natura necesse'st,
Immortali ævo summâ cum pace fruatur,
Semota ab nostris rebus, sejunctaque longè;
Nam privata dolore omni, privata peric'lis,
Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri,
Nec benè promeritis capitur, nec tangitur irâ.*

“It is in direct opposition to all such vain and sceptical speculations that Christianity always represents and speaks of the Deity as participating, so far as infinity and perfection may participate, in those feelings and affections which belong to our rational natures.”—GRINFIELD'S *Vindiciæ Analogiæ*.

we find them stated in the Scriptures. They there clearly signify no more than the change which takes place in the affections of God, his anger or his love, as men turn from the practice of righteousness, or repent and turn back again to him ; and the consequent changes in his dispensations towards them as their Governor and Lord. This is the scriptural doctrine, and there is nothing in it which is not most worthy of God, though literally interpreted ; nothing which is not consistent with his absolute immutability. He is unchangeably the lover and the rewarder of righteousness, unchangeably the hater and the judge of iniquity ; and as his creatures are righteous or wicked, or are changed from the one state to the other, they become the objects of the different regards and of the different administrations, of the same righteous and gracious Sovereign, who, by these very changes, shows that he is without “variableness, or shadow of turning.”

If, then, there is no reason for not attributing even certain affections of the human mind to God, when connected with absolute perfection and excellence in their nature and in their exercise, no reason certainly can be given for not considering his intellectual attributes, represented, as to their nature, though not as to their degree, by terms taken from the faculties of the human mind, as corresponding with our own. But the matter is placed beyond all doubt by the appeal which is so often made in the Bible to these properties in man, not as illustrations only of something distantly and indistinctly analogous to properties in the divine nature, but as representations of the nature and reality of these qualities in the supreme Being, and which are, therefore, made the grounds of argument, the basis of duty, and the sources of consolation.

With respect to the nature of God, it is sufficient to refer to the passage before mentioned, “God is a Spirit,” where the argument is, that he requires not a ceremonial but a spiritual worship, the worship of man’s spirit ; because he himself is a Spirit. How this argument could be brought out on Archbishop King’s and Dr. Copleston’s theory, it is difficult to state. It would be something of this kind : “God is a Spirit ;” that is, he is called a Spirit, because his nature is

analogous to the spiritual nature of man ; but this analogy implies no similarity of nature ; it is a mere analogy of relation ; and, therefore, though we have no direct and proper notion of the nature of God, yet, because he is called “ a Spirit,” “ they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” This is, indeed, far from being an intelligible, and it is still less a practical, argument.

With respect to his intellectual attributes, it is argued in Scripture, “ He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know ? ” Here the knowledge of God is supposed to be of the same nature as the knowledge of man. This is the sole foundation of the argument ; which would have appeared indescribably obscure, if, according to Archbishop King’s hypothesis, it had stood, “ He that teacheth man knowledge, shall he not have somewhat in his nature, which, because it gives rise to actions similar to those which proceed from knowledge, we may call ‘ knowledge,’ but of which we have no direct or proper notion ? ”

With respect to his moral attributes, we find the same appeals. “ Shall not the Judge of the whole earth do right ? ” Here the abstract term “ right ” is undoubtedly used in the sense commonly received among men, and is supposed to be comprehensible by them. “ The righteous Lord loveth righteousness.” The righteousness in man which he loveth is clearly correspondent in its kind to that which constitutes him eminently “ the righteous Lord.” Still more forcibly, the house of Israel is called upon “ to judge between him and his vineyard ; ” he condescends to try his own justice by the notions of justice which prevail among men ; in which there could be no meaning, if this moral quality were not in God and in man of the same kind. “ Hear now, O house of Israel, is not my way equal ? ” But what force would there be in this challenge, designed to silence the murmurs of a people under correction, as though they had not been justly dealt with, if justice among men had no more resemblance to justice in God, than a hand to power, or an eye to knowledge, or “ a map of China to China itself ? ” The appeal is to a standard common to both, and by which one might be as explicitly

determined as the other.* Finally: The ground of all praise and adoration of God for works of mercy and judgment,—of all trust in God, on account of his faithfulness and truth,—and of all imitation of God in his mercy and compassion,—is laid in every part of the word of God, not surely in this, that there are unknown and unapprehended qualities of some kind in God, which lead him to perform actions similar to those which flow from justice, truth, and mercy in men; but in the consideration that he is justice itself, truth itself, and goodness itself. The hypothesis is, therefore, contradicted by the Scripture; and though it has been assumed in favour of a great truth,—that the prescience of God does not destroy the liberty of man,—that truth needs not so cumbrous and mischievous an auxiliary. Divine foreknowledge and the freedom of human agency are compatible, not because foreknowledge in God is a figure of speech, or something different in kind from foreknowledge in man; but because knowledge, simply considered, whether present, past, or future, can have no influence upon action at all, and cannot, therefore, change a contingent action into a necessary one.

For, after all, where does the great theological difficulty lie, for the evasion of which so much is to be sacrificed? The prescience, counsels, and plans of God, are prescience, coun-

* “How can we confess God to be just, if we understand it not? But how can we understand him so, but by the measures of justice? and how shall we know that, if there be two justices, one that we know, and one that we know not, one contrary to another? If they be contrary, they are not justice; for justice can be no more opposed to justice, than truth to truth: If they be not contrary, then that which we understand to be just in us, is just in God; and that which is just once, is just for ever in the same case and circumstances: And, indeed, how is it that we are in all things of excellency and virtue to be like God, and to be meek like Christ, to be humble as he is humble, and to be pure like God, to be just after his example, to be merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful? If there is but one mercy, and one justice, and one meekness, then the measure of these, and the reason, is eternally the same. If there be two, either they are not essential to God, or else not imitable by us; and then how can we glorify God, and speak honour of his name, and exalt his justice, and magnify his truth, and sincerity, and simplicity, if truth and simplicity, and justice and mercy in him, is not that thing which we understand, and which we are to imitate?” &c.—BISHOP TAYLOR’S *Ductor Dubitantium*.

sels and plans which respect free agents, as far as men are concerned ; and unless we superadd influence to necessitate, or plans to entice irresistibly, and to entrap inevitably, into some given course of conduct, there is clearly no incongruity between these and human freedom. There is a difficulty in conceiving how foreknowledge should be absolute, as there is a difficulty in conceiving how God's present knowledge should penetrate the heart of man, and know his present thoughts ; but neither party argues from the incomprehensibility of the mode to the impossibility of the thing. The great difficulty does not then lie here. It seems to be planted precisely in this, that God should prohibit many things, which he nevertheless knows will occur, and in the prescience of which he regulates his dispensations to bring out of these circumstances various results, which he makes subservient to the displays of his mercy and his justice ; and particularly, that in the case of those individuals who he knows will finally perish, he exhorts, warns, invites, and, in a word, takes active and influential means to prevent a foreseen result. This forms the difficulty ; because, in the case of man, the prescience of failure would, in many cases, paralyze all effort ; whereas, in the government of God, men are treated, in our views, with as much intensity of care and effort, as though the issue of things was entirely unknown. But if the perplexity arises from this, nothing can be more clear than that the question is, not how to reconcile God's prescience with the freedom of man, but how to reconcile the conduct of God towards man, considered as a free agent, with his own prescience ; how to assign a congruity to warnings, exhortations, and other means adopted to prevent destruction as to individuals, with the certain foresight of that terrible result. In this, however, no moral attribute of God is impugned. On the contrary, mercy requires the application of means of deliverance, if man be under a dispensation of grace ; and justice requires it, if man is to be judged for the use or abuse of mercy. The difficulty then entirely resolves itself into a mere matter of feeling, which, of course,—as we cannot be judges of a nature infinite in perfection, though similar to what is excellent in our own, nor of proceedings that,

in the unlimited range of the government of God, may have connexions and bearings beyond all our comprehension,—we cannot reduce to a human standard. Is it, then, to adjust a mere matter of feeling, that we are to make these outrageous interpretations of the word of God, in what he hath spoken of himself? And are we to assert that we have no “proper or direct notion of God,” because we cannot find him out to perfection? This difficulty, which we ought not to dare to try by human standards, is not one, however, we again remark, which arises at all out of the relation of the divine prescience to the liberty of human actions; and it is entirely untouched by any part of this controversy. We fall into new difficulties through these speculations, but do not escape the true one. If the freedom of man is denied, the moral attributes of God are impugned; and the difficulty, as a matter of feeling, is heightened. Divine prescience cannot be denied, because the prophetic Scriptures have determined that already; and if Archbishop King’s interpretation of foreknowledge be resorted to, the something substituted for prescience, and equivalent to it, comes in, to bring us back, in a fallacious circle, to the point from which we started.

It may, therefore, be certainly concluded, that the omniscience of God comprehends his certain prescience of all events, however contingent; and if any thing more were necessary to strengthen the argument above given, it might be drawn from the irrational, and, above all, the unscriptural, consequences, which would follow from the denial of this doctrine. These are forcibly stated by President Edwards:—

“It would follow from this notion, (namely, that the Almighty doth not foreknow what will be the result of future contingencies,) that as God is liable to be continually repenting what he has done, so he must be exposed to be constantly changing his mind and intentions as to his future conduct; altering his measures, relinquishing his old designs, and forming new schemes and projections. For his purposes, even as to the main parts of his scheme, namely, such as belong to the state of his moral kingdom, must be always liable to be broken, through want of foresight; and he must be continually

putting his system to rights, as it gets out of order, through the contingency of the actions of moral agents : He must be a Being who, instead of being absolutely immutable, must necessarily be the subject of infinitely the most numerous acts of repentance, and changes of intention, of any being whatsoever ; for this plain reason, that his vastly extensive charge comprehends an infinitely greater number of those things which are to him contingent and uncertain. In such a situation he must have little else to do, but to mend broken links as well as he can, and be rectifying his disjointed frame and disordered movements, in the best manner the case will allow. The supreme Lord of all things must needs be under great and miserable disadvantages, in governing the world which he has made, and has the care of, through his being utterly unable to find out things of chief importance, which hereafter shall befall his system ; which if he did but know, he might make seasonable provision for. In many cases, there may be very great necessity that he should make provision, in the manner of his ordering and disposing things, for some great events which are to happen, of vast and extensive influence, and endless consequence to the universe ; which he may see afterwards, when it is too late, and may wish in vain that he had known beforehand, that he might have ordered his affairs accordingly. And it is in the power of man, on these principles, by his devices, purposes, and actions, thus to disappoint God, break his measures, make him continually to change his mind, subject him to vexation, and bring him into confusion."

CHAPTER V

Attributes of God :—Immutability—Wisdom.

ANOTHER of the qualities of the divine nature, on which the sacred writers often dwell, is his unchangeableness. This is indicated in his august and awful title, “I am.” All other beings are dependent and mutable, and thus stand in striking contrast to Him who is independent and therefore capable of no mutation. “Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth ; and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure ; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment ; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed ; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.” “He is the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” “His counsel standeth fast for ever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations.” “His mercy endureth for ever.” “His righteousness is like the great mountains,” firm and unmovable. “I am the Lord, I change not.”

Of this truth, so important to religion and to morals, there are many confirmations from subjects constantly open to observation. The general order of nature, in the revolutions of the heavenly bodies ; the succession of seasons ; the laws of animal and vegetable production ; and the perpetuation of every species of beings, from which, if there be occasional deviations, they prove the general regularity and stability of this material system, or they would cease to attract attention. The ample universe, therefore, with its immense aggregate of individual beings and classes of beings, not only displays the all-comprehending and pervading power of God, but, as it remains from age to age subject to the same laws, and fulfilling the same purposes, it is a visible image of the

existence of a Being of steady counsels, free from caprice, and liable to no control. The moral government of God gives its evidence also to the same truth. The laws under which we are now placed are the same as those which were prescribed to the earliest generations of men. What was vice then is vice now; and what is virtue now was then virtue. Miseries of the same kind and degree, inflict punishment on the former; peace and blessedness, as formerly, accompany the latter. God has manifested his will to men by successive revelations,—the patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian,—and those distant from each other many ages; but the moral principles on which each rests are precisely the same, and the moral ends which each proposes. Their differences are circumstantial, varying according to the age of the world, the condition of mankind, and his own plans of infinite wisdom; but the identity of their spirit, their influence, and their character, shows their author to be an unchangeable Being of holiness, truth, justice, and mercy. Vicious men have now the same reason to tremble before God, as in former periods, for he is still of “purer eyes than to behold iniquity;” and the penitent and the pious have the same ground of hope, and the same sure foundation of trust. These are the cautionary and the cheering moral uses to which the sacred writers constantly apply this doctrine. He is “the Lord, the hope of their fathers;” and in all the changes and vicissitudes of life, this is the consolation of his people,—that he will never leave them, nor forsake them. “Though the mountains depart and the hills be removed, yet my kindness shall not depart from thee, nor shall the covenant of my peace be removed.”

It is true, that the stability of the divine operations and counsels, as indicated by the laws of the material universe and the revelations of his will, only show the immutability of God through those periods within which these operations and dispensations have been in force; but in Scripture they are constantly represented as the results of an immutability which arises out of the perfection of the divine nature itself, and which is therefore essential to it. “I am the Lord, I change

not;" he changes not, because he is "the Lord." With him there is "no variableness, neither shadow of turning;" because he is "the Father of lights," the source and fulness of all light and perfection whatever. Change, in any sense which implies defect and infirmity, and therefore imperfection, is impossible to absolute perfection; and immutability is therefore essential to his Godhead. In this sense, he is never capable of any kind of change whatever, as even a Heathen has so strongly expressed it, *οὐδέποτε, οὐδαμῇ, οὐδαμῶς αλλοιωσιν οὐδεμίαν ἐνδεχεται*.^{*} For "if we consider the nature of God, that he is a self-existent and independent Being, the great Creator and wise Governor of all things; that he is a spiritual and simple Being, void of all parts and all mixture, that can induce a change; that he is a sovereign and uncontrollable Being, which nothing from without can affect or work an alteration in; that he is an eternal Being, which always has and always will go on, in the same tenor of existence; an omniscient Being, who, knowing all things, has no reason to act contrary to his first resolves; and, in all respects, a most perfect Being, that can admit of no addition or diminution; we cannot but believe, that, both in his essence, in his knowledge, and in his will and purposes, he must of necessity be unchangeable. To suppose him otherwise, is to suppose him an imperfect being: For if he change, it must be either to a greater perfection than he had before, or to a less: If to a greater perfection, then was there plainly a defect in him, and a privation of something better than what he had or was; then, again, was he not always the best, and consequently not always God: If he change to a lesser perfection, then does he fall into a defect again; lose a perfection he was possessed once of, and so, ceasing to be the best being, cease at the same time to be God. The sovereign perfection of the Deity, therefore, is an invincible bar against all mutability; for, which way soever we suppose him to change, his supreme excellency is nulled or impaired by it: For, since in all changes, there is something from which, and something to

^{*} Plato in *Phæd.*

which, the change is made, a loss of what the thing had, or an acquisition of what it had not, it must follow, that if God change to the better, he was not perfect before, and so not God ; if to the worse, he will not be perfect, and so no longer God, after the change. We esteem changeableness in men either an imperfection or a fault : Their natural changes, as to their persons, are from weakness and vanity ; their moral changes, as to their inclinations and purposes, are from ignorance or inconstancy ; and, therefore, this quality is no way compatible with the glory and attributes of God.”*

In his being and perfections, God is therefore eternally the same. He cannot cease to be ; he cannot be more perfect, because his perfection is absolute ; he cannot be less so, because he is independent of all external power, and has no internal principle of decay. We are not, however, so to interpret the immutability of God, as though his operations admitted no change, and even no contrariety ; or that his mind was incapable of different regards and affections towards the same creatures under different circumstances. He creates, and he destroys ; he wounds, and he heals ; he works, and ceases from his works ; he loves, and hates ; but these, as being under the direction of the same immutable wisdom, holiness, goodness, and justice, are the proofs, not of changing, but of unchanging, principles, as stated in the preceding chapter. They are perfections, not imperfections. Variety of operation, the power to commence, and cease to act, show the liberty of his nature ; the direction of this operation to wise and good ends shows its excellence. Thus, in Scripture language, “ he repents” of threatened or commenced punishment, and shows mercy ; or “ is weary of forbearing” with the obstinately guilty, and so inflicts vengeance. Thus, “ he hates the evil-doer,” and “ loveth the righteous.” That love too may be lost, “ if the righteous turn away from his righteousness ;” and that hatred may be averted, “ when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness.” There is a sense in which this

* Charnock.

may be called "change" in God ; but it is not the change of imperfection and defect. It argues precisely the contrary. If, when "the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness," God's love to him were unchangeable, he could not be the unchangeably holy God, the hater of iniquity ; and "when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness," and, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, becomes a new creature, if he did not become the object of God's love, God would not be the unchangeable lover of righteousness. By these scriptural doctrines, the doctrine of the divine immutability is not therefore contradicted, but confirmed.

Various speculations, however, on the divine immutability occur in the writings of Divines and others, which, though often well intended, ought to be received with caution, and sometimes even rejected as bewildering or pernicious. Such are the notions, that "God knows every thing by intuition ;" that "there is no succession of ideas in the divine mind ;" that "he can receive no new idea ;" that "there are no affections in God, for to suppose that would suppose that he is capable of emotion ;" that "if there are affections in God, as love, hatred, &c., they always exist in the same degree, or else he would suffer change." For these and other similar speculations, recourse may be had to the schoolmen and metaphysicians, by those who are curious in such subjects ; but the impression of the divine character, thus represented, will be found very different from that conveyed by those inspired writings in which God is not spoken of by men, but speaks of himself ; and nothing could be more easily shown than that most of these notions are either idle, as assuming that we know more of God than is revealed ; or such as tend to represent the divine Being, as rather a necessary, than a free agent, and his moral perfections as resulting from a blind physical necessity of nature, more than from an essential moral excellence, or, finally, as unintelligible or absurd. As a specimen of the latter, the following passages may be taken from a work in some repute. The arguments are drawn from the schoolmen, and, though broadly given by the author, will be found more or less to tinge the remarks on the immutability of God, in

the most current systems of theology, and discourses on the attributes :—

“ His knowledge is independent upon the objects known ; therefore whatever changes there are in them, there is none in him. Things known are considered either as past, present, or to come ; and these are not known by us in the same way : For, concerning things past, it must be said, that we once knew them ; or of things to come, that we shall know them hereafter ; whereas God, with one view, comprehends all things past and future, as though they were present.

“ If God’s knowledge were not unchangeable, he might be said to have different thoughts or apprehensions of things, at one time, from what he has at another ; which would argue a defect of wisdom. And, indeed, a change of sentiments implies ignorance, or weakness of understanding ; for to make advances in knowledge, supposes a degree of ignorance ; and to decline therein, is to be reduced to a state of ignorance : Now it is certain, that both these are inconsistent with the infinite perfection of the divine mind ; nor can any such defect be applied to Him who is called, the only wise God.” *

In thus representing the knowledge of God as “ independent of the objects known ;” in order to the establishing of such an immutability of knowledge, as is not only not inconsistent with the perfection of that attribute, but without which it could not be perfect ; and in denying, that knowledge in God has any respect to the past, present, and future of things, a very important distinction between the knowledge of things possible, and the knowledge of things actual, both of which must be attributed to God, is strangely overlooked.

In respect of possible beings, the divine knowledge has no relation to time, and there is in it no past, no future ; he knows his own wisdom and omnipotence, and that is knowing every thing respecting them. But to the possible existence of things, we must now add actual existence ; that commenced

with time, or time with that. Here then is another branch of the divine knowledge, the knowledge of things actually existing,—a distinction with which the operations of our own minds make us familiar; and from the actual existence of things arise order and succession, past, present, and future, not only in the things themselves, but in the divine knowledge of them also: For as there could be no knowledge of things in the divine mind as actually existing, which did not actually exist, (for that would be falsehood, not truth,) so if things have been brought into actual existence in succession, the knowledge of their actual existence must have been successive also; for as actual existences they could not be known as existing before they were. The actual being of things added nothing to the knowledge of the infinite Mind as to their powers and properties. Those he knew from himself, the source of all being; for they all depended upon his will, power, and wisdom. There was no need, for instance, to set the mechanism of this universe in motion, that he might know how it would play, what properties it would exhibit, what would be its results; but the knowledge of the universe, as a congeries of beings in ideal or possible existence, was not the knowledge of it as a real existence; that, as far as we can see, was only possible when “he spake and it was done, when he commanded and it stood fast:” The knowledge of the actual existence of things with God is therefore successive, because things come into being in succession; and, as to actual existences, there is foreknowledge, present knowledge, and after-knowledge, with God as well as with ourselves.

But not only is a distinction to be made between the knowledge of God as to things possibly, and things actually, existing; but also between his knowledge of all possible things, and of those things to which he determined, before their creation, to give actual existence. To deny that, in the divine Mind, any distinction existed between the apprehension of things which would remain possible only, and things which, in their time, were to come into actual being, would be a bold denial of the perfect knowledge of God.

Here, however, it is intimated, that “this makes the knowledge of God to be derived from something out of himself; and if he derive his knowledge from something out of himself, then it must be dependent.” And what evil follows from this? The knowledge of the nature, properties, and relations of things, God has from himself; that is, from the knowledge he has of his own wisdom and omnipotence, by which the things that are have been produced, and from which only they could be produced; and, in this respect, his knowledge is not dependent. But the knowledge that they actually exist is not from himself, except as he makes them to exist; and when they are made to be, then is the knowledge of their actual existence derived from them, that is, from the fact itself. As long as they are, he knows that they are; when they cease to be, he knows that they are not; and before they exist, he knows that they do not yet exist. His knowledge of the crimes of men, for instance, as actually committed, is dependent upon the committal of those crimes. He knows what crime is, independent of its actual existence; but the knowledge of it, as committed, depends not on himself, but upon the creature. And so far is this from derogating from the knowledge of God, that, according to the common reason of things, it is thus only that we can suppose the knowledge of God to be exact and perfect.

But this is not all which sustains the opinion that there is order and succession, also, in the knowledge of the divine Being. It is not only as far as the knowledge of the successive and transient actual existence of things is concerned, that both fore and after-knowledge are to be ascribed to God, but also in another respect: Authors of the class just quoted speak as though God himself had no ideas of time, and order, and succession; as though past, and present, and to come were so entirely and exclusively human, that even the infinite Mind itself had not the power of apprehending them. But if there be actually a successive order of events as to us, and if this be something real, and not a dream; then must there be a corresponding knowledge of it in him, and therefore, in all things which respect us, a knowledge of them as past, present, or to

come ; that is, as they are in the experience of mankind, and in the truth of things itself. Beside this, if there be what the Scriptures call “purposes” with God ; if this expression is not to be ranked with those figures of speech which represent divine power by a hand and an arm, then there is foreknowledge, strictly and properly so called, with God. The knowledge of any thing actually existing is collateral with its existence ; but as the intention to produce any thing, or to suffer it to be produced, must be before the actual existence of the thing, because that is finite and caused, so that very intention is in proof of the precognition of that which is to be produced, immediately by the act of God, or mediately through his permission. The actual occurrence of things in succession, as to us, and in pursuance of his purpose or permission, is, therefore, a sufficient proof of the existence of a strict and proper prescience of them by Almighty God. As to the possible nature, and properties, and relations of things, his knowledge may have no succession, no order of time ; but when those archetypes of things in the eternal Mind come into actual being by his power or permission, it is in pursuance of previous intention : Ideas of time are thus created, so to speak, by the very order in which he produces them, or purposes to produce them ; and his knowledge of them as realities corresponds to their nature and relations, because it is perfect knowledge. He knows them before they are produced, as things which are to be produced or permitted ; when they are produced, he knows them with the additional idea of their actual being ; and when they cease to be, he knows them as things which have been.

Allied to the attribute of immutability, is the liberty of God, which enables us to conceive of his unchangeableness in the noblest and most worthy manner, as the result of his will and infinite moral excellence, and not as the consequence of a blind and physical necessity. “He doeth whatever pleaseth him ;” and his actions are the result of will and choice. This, as Dr. S. Clarke has well stated it, follows from his intelligence ; for “intelligence without liberty is really, in respect of any power, excellence, or perfection, no intelligence at all.

It is, indeed, a consciousness, but it is merely a passive one ; a consciousness not of acting, but purely of being acted upon. Without liberty nothing can, in any tolerable propriety of speech, be said to be an agent or cause of any thing. For to act necessarily is really and properly not to act at all, but only to be acted upon.

“ If the supreme Cause is not a Being endued with liberty and choice, but a mere necessary agent, whose actions are all as absolutely and naturally necessary as his existence ; then it will follow, that nothing which is not could possibly have been ; and that nothing which is could possibly not have been ; and that no mode or circumstance of the existence of any thing could possibly have been, in any respect, otherwise than it now actually is. All which being evidently most false and absurd, it follows, on the contrary, that the supreme Cause is not a mere necessary agent, but a Being endued with liberty and choice.”

It is true that God cannot do evil ; “ it is impossible for him to lie ; ” but “ this is a necessity, not of nature and fate, but of fitness and wisdom ; a necessity consistent with the greatest freedom, and most perfect choice : For the only foundation of this necessity is such an unalterable rectitude of will, and perfection of wisdom, as makes it impossible for a wise being to resolve to act foolishly ; or for a nature infinitely good to choose to do that which is evil.”

Of the wisdom of God, it is here necessary to say little, because many instances of it in the application of knowledge to accomplish such ends as were worthy of himself, and requisite for the revelation of his glory to his creatures, have been given in the proofs of an intelligent and designing cause, with which the world abounds. On this, as well as on the other attributes, the Scriptures dwell with an interesting complacency, and lead us to the contemplation of an unbounded variety of instances in which this perfection of God has been manifested to men. He is “ the only wise God ; ” and as to his works, “ in wisdom hast thou made them all.” Every thing has been done by nice and delicate adjustment, by number, weight, and measure. “ He seeth under the whole

heaven, to make the weight for the winds, to weigh the waters by measure, to make a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder." Whole volumes have been written on this amazing subject,—the wisdom of God in the creation ; and it is still unexhausted. Every research into nature, every discovery as to the laws by which material things are combined, decomposed, and transformed, throws new light upon the simplicity of the elements which are the subjects of this ceaseless operation of divine power, and the exquisite skill and the unbounded compass of the Intelligence which directs it. The vast body of facts which natural philosophy has collected with so much laudable labour, and the store of which is constantly increasing, is a commentary on the words of inspiration ever enlarging, and which will continue to enlarge as long as men remain on earth to pursue such inquiries: "He doeth great things past finding out, and wonders without number." "Lo, these are parts of his ways ; but how little a portion is heard of him !" The excellent books which have been written with the express design to illustrate the wisdom of God, and to exhibit the final causes of the creation and preservation of the innumerable creatures with which we are surrounded, must be referred to on so copious a subject,* and a few general remarks must suffice.

The first character of wisdom is to act for worthy ends. To act with design, is a sufficient character of intelligence ; but wisdom is the fit and proper exercise of the understanding. And though we are not adequate judges of what it is fit and proper for God to do in every case, yet, for many of his acts, the reasons are at least partially given in his own word, and they command at once our adoration and gratitude, as worthy of himself, and benevolent to us. The reason of the creation of the world was the manifestation of the perfections of God to

* Ray's *Wisdom of God* ; Derham's *Astro- and Physico-Theology* ; Paley's *Natural Theology* ; Sturm's *Reflections* ; Kirby and Spence's *Entomology* ; and, though not written with any such design, St. Pierre's *Studies of Nature*, open to the mind that can supply the pious sentiments which the author unfortunately wanted, many striking instances of the wisdom and benevolence of God.

the rational creatures designed to inhabit it, and to confer on them, remaining innocent, a felicity equal to their largest capacity. The end was important, and the means by which it was appointed to be accomplished evidently fit. To be, was itself made a source of satisfaction. God was announced to man as his Maker, Lord, and Friend, by revelation ; but, invisible himself, every object was fitted to make him present to the mind of his creature, and to be a remembrancer of his power, glory, and care. The heavens declared his glory, the fruitful earth his goodness. The understanding of man was called into exercise by the number, and variety, and the curious structure, of the works of God ; pleasures of taste were formed by their sublimity, beauty, and harmony. “ Day unto day uttered speech, night unto night taught knowledge ; ” and God in his law, and in his creative munificence and preserving care, was thus ever placed before his creature, arrayed in the full splendour of his natural and moral attributes, the object of awe and love, of trust and of submission. The great moral end of the creation of man, and of his residence in the world, and the means by which it was accomplished, were, therefore, displays of the divine wisdom.

It is another mark of wisdom when the process by which any work is accomplished is simple, and many effects are produced from one or a few elements. “ When every several effect has a particular separate cause, this gives no pleasure to the spectator, as not discovering contrivance ; but that work is beheld with admiration and delight as the result of deep counsel, which is complicated in its parts, and yet simple in its operation, when a great variety of effects are seen to arise from one principle operating uniformly.”* This is the character of the works of God. From one material substance,† possessing the same essential properties, all the visible beings which

* Abernethy on the Attributes.

† “ A few undecompounded bodies, which may perhaps ultimately be resolved into still fewer elements, or which may be different forms of the same material, constitute the whole of our tangible universe of things.”—DAVY’S *Chemistry*.

surround us are made ; the granite rock, and the central all-pervading sun ; the moveless clod, the rapid lightning, and the transparent air. . Gravitation unites the atoms which compose the world, combines the planets into one system, governs the regularity of their motions ; and yet, vast as is its power, and all-pervading as its influence, it submits to an infinite number of modifications, which allow of the motion of individual bodies ; and it gives place to even contrary forces, which yet it controls and regulates. One act of divine power in giving a certain inclination to the earth's axis, produced the effect of the vicissitude of seasons, gave laws to its temperature, and covered it with increased variety of productions. To the composition of light, and a few simple laws impressed upon it, every object owes its colour, and the heavens and the earth are invested with beauty. A combination of earth, water, and of the gases of the atmosphere, forms the strength and majesty of the oak ; the grace, and beauty, and odour of the rose ; and from the principle of evaporation are formed clouds which " drop fatness," dews which refresh the languid fields, springs and rivers that make the valleys, through which they flow, " laugh and sing."

Variety of equally perfect operation is a character of wisdom. In the works of God the variety is endless, and shows the wisdom from which they spring to be infinite. Of that Mind in which were all the ideas after which the innumerable objects composing the universe must have had a previous and distinct existence, because after that pattern they were made ; and in which were not only the ideas of the things themselves, but of every part of which they are composed, of the place which every particle in their composition should fill, and the part it should act ;—of that Mind we can have no adequate conception. The thought is overwhelming. This variety is too obvious to be dwelt upon ; yet a few of its nicer shades may be adverted to, as showing, so to speak, the infinite resources, and the endlessly diversified conceptions, of the Creator. " O Lord, how manifold are thy works ! " All the three kingdoms of nature pour forth the riches of variety : The varied forms of crystallization and composition in minerals ;

the colours, forms, and qualities of vegetables ; the kinds, and properties, and habits of animals ; the gradations from one class of beings to another ; from unformed to organic, from dead to living, from mechanic sensitiveness to sensation, from dull to active sense, from sluggishness to motion, from creeping to flying, from sensation to intellect, from instinct to reason,* from mortal to immortality, from man to angel, from angel to seraph. Betwixt similitude and total unlikeness, variety has a boundless range ; but its delicacy of touch, so to speak, is shown in the narrower field that lies betwixt similarity and entire resemblance, of which the works of God present so many curious examples. No two things appear exactly alike, when even of the same kind. Plants of the same species, the leaves and flowers of the same plant, have all their varieties. Animals of the same kind have their individual character. Any two blades of grass, or particles of sand, shall show a marked difference when carefully compared. The wisdom of this appears more strongly marked when we consider, that important ends, both intellectual and practical, often depend upon it. The resemblances of various natural things in greater or less degree, become the means of acquiring a knowledge of them with greater ease, because it is made the basis of their arrangement into kinds and sorts, without which the human memory would fail, and the understanding be confused. The differences in things are as important as their resemblances. This is strikingly illustrated in the domestic animals and in men. If the individuals of the former did not

* It is not intended here to countenance the opinion that the difference between the highest instinct and the lowest reason, is not great. It is as great as the difference between an accountable and an unaccountable nature ; between a being under a law of force, and a law of moral obligation and motive ; between a nature limited in its capacity of improvement, and one whose capabilities are unlimited. "The rash hypothesis, that the negro is the connecting link between the white man and the ape, took its rise from the arbitrary classification of Linnæus, which associates man and the ape in the same order. The more natural arrangement of later systems separates them into the bimanous and quadrumanous orders. If this classification had not been followed, it would not have occurred to the most fanciful mind to find in the negro an intermediate link."—PRITCHARD on *Man*.

differ, no property could be claimed in them ; or, when lost, they could not be recovered. The countenance of one human individual differs from all the rest of his species ; his voice and his manner have the same variety. This is not only an illustration of the resources of creative power and wisdom, but of design and intention to secure a practical end. Parents, children, and friends, could not otherwise be distinguished, nor the criminal from the innocent. No felon could be identified by his accuser ; and the courts of judgment would be obstructed, and often rendered of no avail for the protection of life and property.

To variety of kind and form, we may add variety of magnitude. In the works of God, we have the extremes, and those extremes filled up in perfect gradation from magnificence to minuteness. We adore the mighty sweep of that power which scooped out the bed of the fathomless ocean, moulded the mountains, and filled space with innumerable worlds ; but the same hand formed the animalcule which requires the strongest magnifying power of optical instruments to make it visible. In that too the work is perfect. We perceive matter in its most delicate organization,—bones, sinews, tendons, muscles, arteries, veins, the pulse of the heart, and the heaving of the lungs. The workmanship is as complete in the smallest as in the most massive of the works of God.

The connexion and dependence of the works of God are as wonderful as their variety. Every thing fills its place, not by accident, but by design ; wise regulation runs through the whole, and shows that that whole is the work of One, and of One alone. The meanest weed which grows stands in intimate connexion with the mighty universe itself. It depends upon the atmosphere for moisture, which atmosphere supposes an ocean, clouds, winds, gravitation ; it depends upon the sun for colour, and, essentially, for its required degree of temperature. This supposes the revolution of the earth, and the adjustment of the whole planetary system. Too near the sun, it would be burned up ; too far from it, it would be chilled. What union of extremes is here,—the grass of the earth, “ which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven,” with

the stupendous powers of nature, the most glorious works of the right hand of God !

So clearly does wisdom display itself, in the adaptation of means to ends in the visible world, that there are comparatively few of the objects which surround us, and few of their qualities, the use of which is not apparent. In this particular, the degree in which the Creator has been pleased to manifest his wisdom is remarkably impressive.

“ Among all the properties of things, we discover no inutility, no superfluity. Voluntary motion is denied to the vegetable creation, because mechanical motion answers the purpose. This raises, in some plants, a defence against the wind, expands others towards the sun, inclines them to the support they require, and diffuses their seed. If we ascend higher towards irrational animals, we find them possessed of powers exactly suited to the rank they hold in the scale of existence.

“ The oyster is fixed to his rock ; the herring traverses a vast extent of ocean. But the powers of the oyster are not deficient ; he opens his shell for nourishment, and closes it at the approach of an enemy. Nor are those of the herring superfluous ; he secures and supports himself in the frozen seas, and commits his spawn in the summer to the more genial influence of warmer climates. The strength and ferocity of beasts of prey are required by the mode of subsistence allotted to them. If the ant has peculiar sagacity, it is but a compensation for its weakness ; if the bee is remarkable for its foresight, that foresight is rendered necessary by the short duration of its harvest. Nothing can be more various than the powers allowed to animals, each in their order ; yet it will be found, that all these powers, which make the study of nature so endless and so interesting, suffice to their necessities and no more.” *

“ Equally conspicuous is the wisdom of God in the government of nations, of states, and of kingdoms ; yea, rather more conspicuous, if infinite can be allowed to admit of any degrees.

* Sumner's Records of Creation.

For the whole inanimate creation, being totally passive and inert, can make no opposition to his will. Therefore, in the natural world all things roll on in an even, uninterrupted course. But it is far otherwise in the moral world. Here evil men and evil spirits continually oppose the divine will, and create numberless irregularities. Here, therefore, is full scope for the exercise of all the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, in counteracting all the subtlety of Satan, and all the wickedness and folly of men, to carry on his own glorious design, the salvation of lost mankind. Indeed, were he to do this by an absolute decree, and by his own irresistible power, it would imply no wisdom at all. But his wisdom is shown, by saving man in such a manner as not to destroy his nature, nor to take away the liberty which he has given him.”*

But in the means by which offending men are reconciled to God, the inspired writers of the New Testament peculiarly glory, as the most eminent manifestations of the wisdom of God.

“For the wonderful work of redemption the Apostle gives us this note, that ‘he hath therein abounded in all wisdom and prudence.’ Herein did the perfection of wisdom and prudence shine forth, to reconcile the mighty amazing difficulties and seeming contrarieties,—real contrarieties, indeed, if he had not some way intervened to order the course of things,—such as the conflict between justice and mercy; that the one must be satisfied in such a way as the other might be gratified; which could never have had its pleasing, grateful exercise without being reconciled to the former: And that this should be brought about by such an expedient, that there should be no complaint on the one hand nor on the other. Herein hath the wisdom of a crucified Redeemer—that whereof the crucified Redeemer or Saviour was the effected object—triumphed over all the imaginations of men, and all the contrivances even of devils, by that death of his by which the devil purposed the last defeat, the complete destruction of the whole design of his

coming into the world ; even by that very means it is brought about so as to fill hell with horror, and heaven and earth with wonder.”*

“ Wisdom, in the treasure of its incomprehensible light, devised to save man, without prejudice to the perfections of God, by transferring the punishment to a Surety, and thus to punish sin as required by justice ; and pardon the sinner as desired by mercy.”†

* Howe's Posthumous Works.

† Bates's Harmony.

CHAPTER VI.

Attributes of God:—Goodness.

GOODNESS, when considered as a distinct attribute of God, is not taken in the sense of universal rectitude, but signifies “benevolence,” or a disposition to communicate happiness. From an inward principle of good-will, God exerts his omnipotence in diffusing happiness through the universe, in all fitting proportion, according to the different capacities with which he has endowed his creatures, and according to the direction of the most perfect wisdom. “Thou art good, and doest good.” “The Father of lights, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift.” “O praise the Lord ! for he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever.”

This view of the divine character in the holy Scriptures has in it some important peculiarities, too often overlooked, but which give to the revelation they make of God a singular glory.

Goodness, in God, is represented as goodness of nature ; as one of his essential perfections, and not as an accidental or an occasional affection ; and thus he is set infinitely above those imaginary creations of the perverted imaginations of corrupt men, the gods of the Heathen, whose benevolence is described as being occasional, limited, and apt to be disturbed by contrary passions.

Such were the best views of Pagans ; but to us a Being of a far different character is manifested as our Creator and Lord. One of his appropriate and distinguishing names, as proclaimed by himself, signifies, “the gracious One,” and imports goodness in the principle ; and another, “the all-sufficient and all-bountiful Pourer-forth of all good,” and expresses goodness in action. Another interesting view of this attribute is, that the goodness of God is efficient and inexhaustible ; it reaches

every fit case, it supplies all possible want, and endureth for ever. Hence the Talmudists explain שרי, *Shaddai*, in Gen. xvii. 1, by, *In æternum sufficiens sum*, “I am the eternally All-sufficient.” Like his emblem, the sun, which sheds his rays upon the surrounding worlds, and enlightens and cherishes the whole creation, without being diminished in splendour, he imparts without being exhausted, and, ever giving, has yet infinitely more to give.

A third and equally-important representation is, that he takes pleasure in the exercise of benevolence, that he delights in mercy. It is not wrung from him with reluctance ; it is not stintedly measured out ; it is not coldly imparted. God saw the works he had made, that “they were good,” with an evident gratification and delight in what he had imparted to a world full of his goodness, and into which sin and misery had not entered. “He is rich to all that call upon him.” “He giveth liberally, and upbraideth not ;” “exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think.” It is under these views that the Scriptures afford so much encouragement to prayer, and lay so strong a ground for that absolute trust in God which they enjoin as one of our highest duties, as it is the source of our greatest comfort.

Another illustration of the divine goodness, and which is also peculiar to the Scriptures, is, that nothing, if capable of happiness, comes immediately from his forming hands without being placed in circumstances of positive felicity. By Heathens, acquainted only with a state of things in which much misery is suffered, this view of the divine goodness could not be taken ; they could not but suppose either many gods, (some benevolent, and others, and the greater number, of an opposite character,) or one in whose nature no small proportion of malevolence was intermixed with milder sentiments. The Scriptures, on the contrary, represent misery as brought into the world by the fault of creatures ; and that otherwise it had never entered. When God made the world, he made it good ; when he made man, he made him happy, with power to remain so. He sows good seed in his field ; and if tares spring up, “an enemy hath done this.” This is the

doctrine of inspiration. Finally: The Scriptures, upon this lapse of man, and the introduction of natural and moral evil, represent God as establishing an order of perfectly-sufficient means to remedy both. One of his names is, therefore, גואל, *Goel*, "the Redeemer;" and another, בונה, *Bonah*, "the Restorer." The means by which he justifies these titles display his goodness with such peculiar eminence, that they are called "the riches of his grace," and, sometimes, "the riches of his glory." By the incarnation and sacrificial death of the Son of God, he became the *Goel*, the Kinsman and Redeemer of mankind; he bought back and restored the forfeited inheritance of happiness, present and eternal, into the human family, and placed it again within the reach of every human being. In anticipation of this propitiation, the first offender was forgiven and raised to eternal life; and the same mercy has been promised to all his descendants. No man perishes finally but by his own refusal of the mercy of his God. And though the restoration of individuals is not at once followed by the removal of the natural evils of pain, death, &c.: (for had the whole race of man accepted the offered grace, they would not, in this present state, have been removed;) yet, beyond a short life on earth, these evils are not extended; and, even in this life, they are made the means of moral ends, tending to a higher moral perfection, and greater happiness in another.

Such are the views of the divine goodness, as unfolded in the Scriptures; views of the utmost importance in an inquiry into the proofs of this attribute of the divine nature, which are afforded by the actual circumstances of the world. Independent of their aid, no proper estimate can be taken of the sum of evil which actually exists, nor of its bearing upon the divine character. On these subjects there have been conflicting opinions; and the principal reason has been, that many persons, on both sides, (those who have impugned the goodness of God, and those who have defended it against objections taken from the existence of evil,) have too often made the question a subject of pure natural theology; and have, therefore, necessarily formed their conclusions on a partial and

most defective view of the case. This is not, indeed, a subject for natural theology ; it is absurd to make it so ; and the best writers have either been pressed with the insuperable difficulties which have arisen from excluding the light which revelation throws upon the state of man in this world, and his connexion with another ; or, like Paley, they have burst the self-inflicted restraints, and confessed, “that when we let in religious considerations, we let in light upon the difficulties of nature.”

With respect to the illustrations of the divine goodness which are presented in the natural and moral world, there are extremes of opinion on both sides. The views of some are too gloomy, and shut out much of the evidences of the divine benignity ; others embrace a system of optimism, and exclude, on the other hand, the manifestations of the divine justice, and the retributive character of the universal Governor. The Scriptures enable us to adjust these extremes, and to give to God the glory of an absolute goodness, without limiting its tenderness by severity, or diminishing its majesty by weakness.

The dark side of the actual state of the world, and of man its inhabitant, has often, for insidious purposes, been very deeply shadowed. The facts alleged may, indeed, be generally admitted. The globe, as the residence of man, has its inconveniences and positive evils ; its variable, and often pernicious, climates ; its earthquakes, volcanoes, tempests, and inundations ; its sterility, in some places, which wears down man with labour ; its exuberance of vegetable and animal life in others, which generates disease, or gives birth to annoying and destructive animals ; the diseases of the human race ; their short life, and painful dissolution ; their general poverty ; their universal sufferings and cares ; the distractions of civil society ; oppressions, frauds, and wrongs ; must all be acknowledged. To these may be added the sufferings and death of animals, and the universal war carried on between different creatures throughout the earth. This enumeration of evils might, indeed, be greatly enlarged, without exaggeration.

But this is not the only view to be taken. It must be combined with others equally obvious ; there are lights as well as shadows in the scene, and the darkest masses which it presents are mingled with bright and joyous colours.

For, as Paley has observed, "In a vast plurality of instances, in which contrivance is perceived, the design of the contrivance is beneficial.

" When God created the human species, either he wished their happiness, or he wished their misery, or he was indifferent and unconcerned about either.

" If he had wished our misery, he might have made sure of his purpose, by forming our senses to be so many sores and pains to us, as they are now instruments of gratification and enjoyment ; or, by placing us amidst objects so ill-suited to our perceptions as to have continually offended us, instead of ministering to our refreshment and delight. He might have made, for example, every thing we tasted, bitter ; every thing we saw, loathsome ; every thing we touched, a sting ; every smell, a stench ; and every sound, a discord.

" If he had been indifferent about our happiness or misery, we must impute to our good fortune, (as all design by this supposition is excluded,) both the capacity of our senses to receive pleasure, and the supply of external objects fitted to produce it.

" But either of these, and still more both of them, being too much to be attributed to accident, nothing remains but the first supposition, that God, when he created the human species, wished their happiness ; and made for them the provision which he has made, with that view and for that purpose.

" The same argument may be proposed in different terms, thus : Contrivance proves design ; and the predominant tendency of the contrivance indicates the disposition of the designer. The world abounds with contrivances ; and all the contrivances which we are acquainted with are directed to beneficial purposes. Evil no doubt exists, but is never, that we can perceive, the object of contrivance. Teeth are contrived to eat, not to ache : Their aching now and then is

incidental to the contrivance, perhaps inseparable from it ; or even, if you will, let it be called a defect in the contrivance ; but it is not the object of it. This is a distinction which well deserves to be attended to. In describing implements of husbandry, you would hardly say of the sickle, that it is made to cut the reaper's hand, though from the construction of the instrument, and the manner of using it, this mischief often follows. But if you had occasion to describe instruments of torture or execution, 'This engine,' you would say, 'is to extend the sinews ; this, to dislocate the joints ; this, to break the bones ; this, to scorch the soles of the feet.' Here pain and misery are the very objects of the contrivance. Now, nothing of this sort is to be found in the works of nature. We never discover a train of contrivance to bring about an evil purpose. No anatomist ever discovered a system of organization calculated to produce pain and disease ; or, in explaining the parts of the human body, ever said, 'This is to irritate ; this to inflame ; this duct is to convey the gravel to the kidneys ; this gland, to secrete the humour which forms the gout.' If by chance he come to a part of which he knows not the use, the most he can say is, that it is useless : No one ever suspects that it is put there to incommode, to annoy, or to torment."*

The chief exceptions to this are those of venomous animals, and of animals preying upon one another ; on the first of which it has been remarked, not only that the number of venomous creatures is few, but that "the animal itself being regarded, the faculty complained of is good ; being conducive, in all cases, to the defence of the animal ; in some cases, to the subduing of its prey ; and in some probably to the killing of it, when caught, by a mortal wound inflicted in the passage to the stomach, which may be no less merciful to the victim, than salutary to the devourer. In the viper, for instance, the poisonous fang may do that which, in other animals of prey, is done by the crush of the teeth. Frogs and mice might be swallowed alive without it.

* Natural Theology.

“ The second case, namely, that of animals devouring one another, furnishes a consideration of much larger extent. To judge whether, as a general provision, this can be deemed an evil, even so far as we understand its consequences, which probably is a partial understanding, the following reflections are fit to be attended to :—

“ Immortality upon this earth is out of the question. Without death, there could be no generation, no parental relation ; that is, as things are constituted, no animal happiness. The particular duration of life, assigned to different animals, can form no part of the objection ; because, whatever that duration be, whilst it remains finite and limited, it may always be asked, why it is no longer. The natural age of different animals varies from a single day to a century of years. No account can be given of this ; nor could any be given, whatever other proportion of life had obtained amongst them.

“ The term, then, of life in different animals, being the same as it is, the question is, What mode of taking it away is the best even for the animal itself ?

“ Now, according to the established order of nature, (which we must suppose to prevail, or we cannot reason at all upon the subject,) the three methods by which life is usually put an end to, are acute diseases, decay, and violence. The simple and natural life of brutes is not often visited by acute distempers ; nor could it be deemed an improvement of their lot if they were. Let it be considered, therefore, in what a condition of suffering and misery a brute animal is placed, which is left to perish by decay. In human sickness or infirmity, there is the assistance of man’s rational fellow-creatures, if not to alleviate his pains, at least to minister to his necessities, and to supply the place of his own activity. A brute, in his wild and natural state, does every thing for himself. When his strength, therefore, or his speed, or his limbs, or his senses, fail him, he is delivered over, either to absolute famine, or to the protracted wretchedness of a life slowly wasted by scarcity of food. Is it then to see the world filled with drooping, superannuated, half-starved, helpless, and unhelped animals, that you would alter the present system of pursuit and prey ?

“ 2. This system is also to them the spring of motion and activity on both sides. The pursuit of its prey forms the employment, and appears to constitute the pleasure, of a considerable part of the animal creation. The using of the means of defence, or flight, or precaution, forms also the business of another part. And even of this latter tribe, we have no reason to suppose that their happiness is much molested by their fears. Their danger exists continually ; and in some cases they seem to be so far sensible of it as to provide, in the best manner they can, against it ; but it is only when the attack is actually made upon them, that they appear to suffer from it. To contemplate the insecurity of their condition with anxiety and dread requires a degree of reflection which (happily for themselves) they do not possess. A hare, notwithstanding the number of its dangers and its enemies, is as playful an animal as any other.”

It is to be observed that, as to animals, there is still much happiness :—

“ The air, the earth, the water, teem with delightful existence. In a spring noon, or a summer evening, on whichever side I turn my eyes, myriads of happy beings crowd upon my view. ‘ The insect youth are on the wing.’ Swarms of new-born flies are trying their pinions in the air. Their sportive motions, their wanton mazes, their gratuitous activity, their continual change of place without use or purpose, testify their joy and the exultation which they feel in their lately-discovered faculties. A bee, amongst the flowers in spring, is one of the cheerfullest objects that can be looked upon. Its life appears to be all enjoyment ; so busy and so pleased ; yet it is only a specimen of insect life, with which, by reason of the animal being half-domesticated, we happen to be better acquainted than we are with that of others. The whole winged insect tribe, it is probable, are equally intent upon their proper employments, and, under every variety of constitution, gratified, and perhaps equally gratified, by the offices which the Author of their nature has assigned to them. But the atmosphere is not the only scene of enjoyment for the insect race. Plants are covered with aphides, greedily sucking

their juices, and constantly, as it should seem, in the act of sucking. It cannot be doubted but that this is a state of gratification. What else should fix them so close to the operation, and so long? Other species are running about with an alacrity in their motions which carries with it every mark of pleasure. Large patches of ground are sometimes half-covered with these brisk and sprightly natures. If we look to what the waters produce, shoals of the fry of fish frequent the margins of rivers, of lakes, and of the sea itself. These are so happy, that they know not what to do with themselves. Their attitudes, their vivacity, their leaps out of the water, their frolics in it, (which I have noticed a thousand times with equal attention and amusement,) all conduce to show their excess of spirits, and are simply the effects of that excess.

“At this moment, in every given moment of time, how many myriads of animals are eating their food, gratifying their appetites, ruminating in their holes, accomplishing their wishes, pursuing their pleasures, taking their pastimes! In each individual how many things must go right, for it to be at ease; yet how large a proportion out of every species are so, in every assignable instant! Throughout the whole of life, as it is diffused in nature, and as far as we are acquainted with it, looking to the average of sensations, the plurality and the preponderancy is in favour of happiness by a vast excess. In our own species, in which perhaps the assertion may be more questionable than in any other, the prepollency of good over evil, of health (for example) and ease over pain and distress, is evinced by the very notice which calamities excite. What inquiries does the sickness of our friends produce! What conversation, their misfortunes! This shows that the common course of things is in favour of happiness; that happiness is the rule, misery the exception. Were the order reversed, our attention would be called to examples of health and competency, instead of disease and want.”*

Various alleviations of positive evils, and their being con-

* Paley's Natural Theology.

nected with beneficial ends, are also to be taken into consideration. Pain teaches vigilance and caution, and renders its remission in a state of health a source of higher enjoyment. For numerous diseases also, remedies are, by the providence of God, and his blessing upon the researches of man, established. The process of mortal diseases has the effect of mitigating the natural horror we have of death. Sorrows and separations are smoothed by time. The necessity of labour obliges us to occupy time usefully, which is both a source of enjoyment, and the means of preventing much mischief in a world of corrupt and ill-inclined men; and familiarity and habit render many circumstances and inconveniences tolerable, which, at first sight, we conceive to be necessarily the sources of wretchedness. In all this, there is surely an ample proof and an adorable display of the divine benevolence.

In considering the actual existence of evils in the world, as it affects the question of the goodness of God, we must also make a distinction between those evils which are self-inflicted, and those which are inevitable. The question of the reconcilableness of the permission of evil with the goodness of God, will be distinctly considered; but waving this for the moment, nothing can be more obvious than that man himself is chargeable with by far the largest share of the miseries of the present life, and that they draw no cloud over the splendour of universal goodness. View men collectively. Sin, as a ruling habit, is not necessary. The means of repressing its inward motions, and restraining its outward acts, are or have been furnished to all mankind; and yet, were all those miseries which are the effects of voluntary vice removed, how little comparatively would remain to be complained of in the world! Oppressive governments, private wrongs, wars, and all their consequent evils, would disappear. Peace, security, and industry would cover the earth with fruits, in sufficient abundance for all; and for accidental wants, the helpless, sick, and aged would find a prompt supply in the charity of others. Regulated passions and an approving conscience would create benevolent tempers, and these would displace

inward disquiet with inward peace. Disease would remain, accidents to life and limb occur, death would ensue; but diseases would, in consequence of temperance, be less frequent and formidable, men would ordinarily attain a peaceful age, and sink into the grave by silent decay. Beside the removal of so many evils, how greatly would the sum of positive happiness be increased! Intellectual improvement would yield the pleasures of knowledge; arts would multiply the comforts, and mitigate many of the most wasting toils, of life; general benevolence would unite men in warm affections and friendships, productive of innumerable reciprocal offices of kindness; piety would crown all with the pleasures of devotion, the removal of the fear of death, and the hope of a still better state of being. All this is possible. If it is not actual, it is the fault of the human race, not of their Maker and Redeemer; and his goodness is not, therefore, to be questioned, because they are perverse.

But let the world remain as it is, with all its self-inflicted evils; and let the case of an individual only be considered, with reference to the number of existing evils, from which, by the merciful provision of the grace of God, he may entirely escape, and of those which it is put into his power to mitigate, and even to convert to his benefit. It cannot be doubted as to any individual around us, but that he may escape from the practice and the consequence of every kind of vice, and experience the renewing effects of Christianity,—that he may be justified by faith, adopted into the family of God, receive the hallowing influences of the Holy Ghost, and henceforth walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Why do men who profess to believe in Christianity, when employed in writing systems of “Natural Theology,” which oblige them to reason on the divine goodness, and to meet objections to it, forget this, or transfer to some other branch of theology what is so vital to their own argument? Here the benevolence of God to man comes forth in all its brightness, and throws its illustrations upon his dealings with him. What, in this case, would be the quantum of evil left to be suffered by this individual, morally so restored and so regenerated? No

evils which are the consequences of personal vice,—often a long and fearful train. No inward disquiet, the effect of guilty or foolish passions, another pregnant source of misery. No restless pining of spirit after an unknown good, creating a distaste to present innocent enjoyments: He has found that good in the favour and friendship of God. No discontent with the allotments of Providence: He has been taught a peaceful submission. No irritable restlessness under his sufferings and sorrows: “In patience he possesses his soul.” No fearful apprehension of the future: He knows that there is a guiding eye, and a supporting hand above, employed in all his concerns. No tormenting anxiety as to life or death: “He has a lively hope” of an inheritance in heaven. What then of evil remains to him but the common afflictions of life? all of which he feels, but does not sink under; and which, as they exercise, improve his virtues, and, by rendering them more exemplary and influential to others, are converted into ultimate benefits. Into this state any individual may be raised; and what is thus made possible to us by divine goodness, is of that attribute an adorable manifestation.

These views, however, whilst they remove the weight of any objections which may be made to the benevolence of the divine character, taken from the existence of actual evils in the world, are at as great a distance as possible from that theory on this subject which has been denominated “optimism.” This opinion is, briefly, not that the present system of being is the best that might be conceived, but the best which the nature of things would admit of; that betwixt not creating at all, and creating material, and sentient, and rational beings, as we find them now circumstanced, and with their present qualities, there was no choice. Accordingly, with respect to natural evils, the optimists appear to have revived the opinion of the oriental and Grecian schools, that matter has in it an inherent defect and tendency to disorder, which baffled the skill of the great Artificer himself to form it into a perfect world; and that moral evil as necessarily follows from finite, and therefore imperfect, natures. No imputation, they infer, can be cast

upon the Creator, whose goodness, they contend, is abundantly manifest in correcting many of these evils by skilful contrivances, and rendering them, in numerous instances, the occasion of good. Thus the storm, the earthquake, and the volcano, in the natural world, though necessary consequences of imperfection in the very nature of matter, are rendered by their effects beneficial, in the various ways which natural philosophy points out; and thus even moral evils are necessary to give birth to, and to call into exercise, the opposite qualities of virtue, which but for them could have no exercise. For instance: If no injuries were inflicted, there could be no place for the virtue of forgiveness. To this also they add the doctrine of general laws, according to which the universe must be conducted; but they argue that, however well set and constituted general laws may be, they will often thwart and cross one another, and that particular inconveniences will thence arise. The constitution of things is, notwithstanding, good on the whole; and that is all which can be required.

The apology for the divine goodness afforded by such an hypothesis will not be accepted by those most anxious to defend this attribute from atheistic cavils; and though it has had its advocates among some who have professed respect for the Scriptures, yet it could never have been adopted by them, had they not been too regardless of the light which they cast upon these subjects, and been led astray by the vain project of constructing perfect systems of natural religion, and by attempting to unite the difficulties that arise out of them, by the aid of unassisted reason. The very principle of this hypothesis, that "the nature of things did not admit of a better world," implies a very unworthy notion of God. It was pardonable in the ancient advocates of the eternity of matter, to ascribe to it an essential imperfection, and inseparable evil qualities; but if the doctrine of creation, in the proper sense, be allowed, the omnipotence which could bring matter out of nothing was just as able to invest it with good as with evil qualities; and He who arranged it to produce so much beauty, harmony, security, and benefit, as we actually find in the world, could be at no loss to render his work perfect in every

respect, and needed not the balancings and counteractions of one evil against another to effect his benevolent purposes. Accordingly, in fact, we find that, when God had finished his work, he pronounced it, not merely good comparatively, but "very good," or good absolutely. Nor is it true that, in the moral world, vice must necessarily exist in order to virtue; and that if we value the one, we must, in the nature of things, be content to take it with the other. We are told, indeed, that no forgiveness could be exercised by one human being, if injury were not inflicted by another; no meekness could be displayed, were there no anger; no long-suffering, were there no perverseness, &c. But the fallacy lies in separating the acts of virtue from the principles of virtue. All the above instances may be reduced to one principle of benevolence, which may exist in as high a degree, when never called forth by such occasions; and express itself in acts quite as explicit, in a state of society from which sin is excluded. There are, for instance, according to Scripture, beings called "angels," who kept their first state, and have never sinned. In such a society as theirs, composed probably of different orders of intelligences, some more advanced in knowledge than others, some with higher and others with lower degrees of perfection, "as one star differeth from another star in glory;" how many exercises of humility and condescension; how much kind communication of knowledge by some, and meek and grateful reception of it by others; how many different ways in which a perfect purity, and a perfect love, and a perfect freedom from selfishness may display themselves! When, therefore, the principle of universal benevolence may be conceived to display itself so strikingly in a sinless state of society, does it need injury to call it forth in the visible form of forgiveness? anger, in the form of meekness? obstinacy, in the form of forbearance? Certainly not; and it demands no effort of mind to infer that did such occasions exist to call for it, it would be developed, not only in the particular modes just named, but in every other.

In opposition to the view taken by such theorists, we may deny that "whatever is, is best." We can not only conceive

of a better state of things as possible ; but can also show that the evils which actually exist, whether natural or moral, do not exist necessarily. . It is, indeed, a proof of the divine goodness, to bring good out of evil ; to make storms and earthquakes, which are destructive to the few, beneficial to the many ; to render the sins of men occasions to try, exercise, and perfect various virtues in the good ; but if man had been under an unmixed dispensation of mercy, all these ends might obviously have been accomplished, independent of the existence of evils, natural or moral, in any degree. The true key to the whole subject is furnished by divine revelation. Sin has entered the world. Man is under the displeasure of his Maker. Hence we see natural evils, and punitive acts of the divine administration, not because God is not good, but because he is just as well as good. But man is not left under condemnation ; through the propitiation made for his sins by the sacrifice of Christ, he is a subject of mercy. He is under correction, not under unmingled wrath ; and hence the displays of the divine benevolence, which the world and the acts of Providence everywhere, and throughout all ages, present ; and, in proportion as good predominates, kindness triumphs against severity, and the divine character is emblazoned in our sight as one that “delighteth in mercy.”

To this representation of the actual relations in which the human race stand to God, and to no other hypothesis, the state of the world exactly answers, and thus affords an obvious and powerful confirmation of the doctrine of revelation. This view has been drawn out at length by a late ingenious writer,* and, in many instances, with great felicity of illustration. A few extracts will show the course of the argument. The first relates to the convulsions which have been undergone by the globe itself :—

“Suppose a traveller, penetrating into regions placed beyond the sphere of his antecedent knowledge, suddenly to find himself on the confines of a city lying in ruins. Suppose the desolation, though bearing marks of ancient date, to manifest

* Gisborne's Testimony of Natural Philosophy to Christianity.

unequivocal proofs that it was not effected by the mouldering hand of time, but has been the result of design and of violence. Dislocated arches, pendent battlements, interrupted aqueducts, towers undermined and subverted, while they record the primeval strength and magnificence of the structures, proclaim the determined purpose, the persevering exertions, with which force had urged forward the work of destruction. Suppose farther that, in surveying the relics which had survived through the silent lapse of ages, the stranger discovers a present race of inhabitants, who have reared their huts amidst the wreck. He inquires the history of the scene before him. He is informed, that the city, once distinguished by splendour, by beauty, by every arrangement and provision for the security, the accommodation, the happiness of its occupiers, was reduced to its existing situation by the deliberate resolve and act of its own lawful Sovereign, the very Sovereign by whom it had been erected, the Emperor of that part of the world. ‘Was he a ferocious tyrant?’ ‘No,’ is the universal reply; ‘he was a Monarch pre-eminent for consistency, forbearance, and benignity.’ ‘Was his judgment blinded or misled by erroneous intelligence as to the plans and proceedings of his subjects?’ ‘He knew every thing but too well. He understood with undeviating accuracy; he decided with unimpeachable wisdom.’ ‘The case, then,’ cries the traveller, ‘is plain; the conclusion is inevitable. Your forefathers assuredly were ungrateful rebels; and thus plucked down devastation upon their city, themselves, and their posterity.’

“The actual appearance of the globe on which we dwell is in strict analogy with the picture of our hypothetical city.

“The earth, whatever may be the configuration, whatever may have been the perturbation or the repose, of its deep and hidden recesses, is, in its superior strata, a mass of ruins. It is not of one land, or of one clime, that the assertion is made; but of all lands, but of all climes, but of the earth universally. Wherever the steep front of mountains discloses their interior construction; wherever native caverns and fissures reveal the disposition of the component materials; wherever the operations of the miner have pierced the successive layers beneath

which coal or metal is deposited ; convulsion, and disruption, and disarrangement are visible. Though the smoothness and uniformity which the hand of cultivation expands over some portions of the globe, and the shaggy mantle of thickets and forests with which nature veils other portions, hitherto unreplicated and unsubdued by mankind, combine to obscure the vestiges of the shocks which our planet has experienced ; —as a fair skin and ornamental attire conceal internal fractures and disorganizations in the human frame ;—to the eye of the contemplative inquirer, exploring the surface of the earth, there is apparent many a scar testifying ancient concussion, and collision, and laceration ; and many a wound yet unhealed, and opening into unknown and unfathomable profundity.

“ From this universal scene of confusion in the superior strata of the earth, let the student of natural theology turn his thoughts to the general works of God. What are the characteristics in which those works, however varied in their kinds, in their magnitudes, and in their purposes, obviously agree ? What are the characteristics by which they are all, with manifest intention, imprinted ? Order and harmony. In every mode of animal life, from the human frame down to the atomic and unsuspected existences in water, which have been rendered visible by the lenses of modern science ; in the vegetable world, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop by the wall, from the hyssop by the wall to the minutest plant discernible under the microscope ; in the crystallizations of the mineral kingdom, of its metals, of its salts, of its spars, of its gems ; in the revolution of the heavenly bodies, and in the consequent reciprocations of day and night, and seasons ; all is regularity. In the works of God order and harmony are the rule ; irregularity and confusion form the rare exception. Under the divine government an exception so portentous as that which we have been contemplating, a transformation from order and harmony to irregularity and confusion, involving the integuments of a world, cannot be attributed to any circumstance which, in common language, we term ‘ fortuitous.’ It proclaims itself to have been owing to a moral cause ; to a moral

cause demanding so vast and extraordinary an effect ; a moral cause which cannot but be deeply interesting to man, cannot but be closely connected with man, the sole being on the face of this globe who is invested with moral agency ; the sole being, therefore, on this globe who is subjected to moral responsibility ; the sole being on this globe whose moral conduct can have had a particle of even indirect influence on the general condition of the globe which he inhabits."

Another instance is supplied from the general deluge. After proving from a number of geological facts, that such a phenomenon must have occurred, the author observes :—

" Thus, while the exterior strata of the earth, by recording, in characters unquestionable and indelible, the fact of a primeval and penal deluge, attest from age to age the holiness and the justice of God ; the form and aspect of its surface are, with equal clearness, testifying from generation to generation his inherent and not less glorious attribute of mercy. For they prove that the very deluge, in its irruption employed as the instrument in his dispensation of vengeance to destroy a guilty world, was, in its recess, so regulated by him as to the varying rapidity of its subsidence, so directed by him throughout all its consecutive operations, as to prepare the desolated globe for the reception of a restored succession of inhabitants ; and so to arrange the surface, as to adapt it in every climate for the sustenance of the animals, for the production of the trees and plants, and for the growth and commodious cultivation of the grain and the fruits, of which man, in that particular region, would chiefly stand in need.

" During the retirement of the waters, when a barrier of a rocky stratum, sufficiently strong for resistance, crossed the line of descent, a lake would be in consequence formed. These memorials of the dominion of that element which had recently been so destructive, remain also as memorials of the mercy of the Restorer of Nature ; and by their own living splendours, and by the beauty and the grandeur of their boundaries, are the most exquisite ornaments of the scenes in which we dwell.

" Would you receive and cherish a strong impression of

the extent of the mercy displayed in the renewal of the face of the earth? Would you endeavour to render justice to the subject? Contemplate the number of the diversified effects on the surface of the globe, which have been wrought, arranged, and harmonized by the divine benignity through the agency of the retiring deluge: And combine in your survey of them the two connected characteristics, utility and beauty; utility to meet the necessities and multiply the comforts of man; beauty graciously superadded to cheer his eye and delight his heart, with which the general aspect of nature is impressed. Observe the mountains, of every form and of every elevation. See them now rising in bold acclivities; now accumulated in a succession of gracefully sweeping ascents; now towering in rugged precipices; now rearing above the clouds their spiry pinnacles glittering with perpetual snow. View their sides now darkened with unbounded forests; now spreading to the sun their ample slopes covered with herbage, the summer resorts of the flocks and the herds of subjacent regions; now scooped into sheltered concavities; now enclosing within their ranges glens green as the emerald, and watered by streams pellucid and sparkling as crystal. Pursue these glens as they unite and enlarge themselves; mark their rivulets uniting and enlarging themselves also; until the glen becomes a valley, and the valley expands into a rich vale or a spacious plain, each varied and bounded by hills, and knolls, and gentle uplands, in some parts chiefly adapted for pasturage, in others for the plough; each intersected and refreshed by rivers flowing onward from country to country, and with streams continually augmented by collateral accessions, until they are finally lost in the ocean. There new modes of beauty are awaiting the beholder; winding shores, bold capes, rugged promontories, deeply indented bays, harbours penetrating far inland and protected from every blast. But in these vast and magnificent features of nature, the gracious Author of all things has not exhausted the attractions with which he purposed to decorate inanimate objects. He pours forth beauties in detail, and with unsparing prodigality of munificence, and, for whatever other reasons, for human

gratification also, on the several portions, however inconsiderable, of which the larger component parts of the splendid whole consist: On the rock, on the fractured stone, on the thicket, on the single tree, on the bush, on the mossy bank, on the plant, on the flower, on the leaf. Of all these works of his wondrous hand, he is continually varying and enhancing the attractions by the diversified modes and accessions of beauty with which he invests them, by the alternations of seasons, by the countless and rapid changes of light and shade, by the characteristic effects of the rising, the meridian, the setting sun, by the subdued glow of twilight, by the soft radiance of the moon, and by the hues, the actions, and the music of the animal tribes with which they are peopled."

The human frame supplies another illustration:—

"Consider the human frame, naked against the elements, instantly susceptible of every external impression; relatively weak, unarmed; during infancy, totally helpless; helpless again in old age; occupying a long period in its progress of growth to its destined size and strength; ungifted with swiftness to escape the wild beast of the forest; incapable, when overtaken, of resisting him; requiring daily supplies of food, and of beverage, not merely that sense may not be ungratified, not merely that vigour may not decline, but that closely impending destruction may be delayed. For what state does such a frame appear characteristically fitted? For what state does it appear to have been originally designed? For a state of innocence and security; for a paradisiacal state; for a state in which all elements were genial, all external impressions innoxious; a state in which relative strength was unimportant, arms were needless; in which to be helpless was not to be insecure; in which the wild beast of the forest did not exist, or existed without hostility to man; a state in which food and beverage were either not precarious, or not habitually and speedily indispensable. Represent to yourself man as innocent, and in consequent possession of the unclouded favour of his God; and then consider whether it be probable, that a frame thus adapted to a paradisiacal state, thus

designated by characteristic indications as originally formed for a paradisiacal state, would have been selected for the world in which we live. Turn to the contrary representation ; a representation the accuracy of which we have already seen the pupil of Natural Theology constrained, by other irresistible testimonies which she has produced, to allow : Regard man as having forfeited by transgression the divine favour, and as placed by his God, with a view to ultimate possibilities of mercy and restoration, in a situation which, amidst tokens and means of grace, is at present to partake of a penal character. For such a situation ; for residence on the existing earth as the appointed scene of discipline at once merciful, moral, and penal ; what frame could be more wisely calculated ? What frame could be more happily adjusted to receive, and to convey, and to aid, and to continue, the impressions, which, if mercy and restoration are to be attained, must antecedently be wrought into the mind ? Is not such a frame, in such a world, a living and a faithful witness, a constant and an energetic remembrancer, to natural reason, that man was created holy ; that he fell from obedience ; that his existence was continued for purposes of mercy and restoration ; that he is placed in his earthly abode under a dispensation bearing the combined marks of attainable grace, and of penal discipline ? Is not such a frame, in such a world, a preparation for the reception, and a collateral evidence to the truth, of Christianity ?”

The occupations of man furnish other instances :—

“ One of his most general and most prominent occupations will necessarily be the cultivation of the ground. As the products drawn from the soil form the basis, not only of human subsistence, but of the wealth which expands itself in the external comforts and ornaments of social life ; we should expect that, under a dispensation comprehending means and purposes of mercy, the rewards of agriculture would be found among the least uncertain and the most liberal of the recompences which Providence holds forth to exertion. Experience confirms the expectation, and attests that man is not rejected of his Creator. Yet how great, how continual, is the toil

annexed to the effective culture of the earth ! How constant the anxiety, lest redundant moisture should corrupt the seed under the clod ; or grubs and worms gnaw the root of the rising plant ; or reptiles and insects devour the blade ; or mildew blast the stalk ; or ungenial seasons destroy the harvest ! How frequently, from these and other causes, are the unceasing labours, and the promising hopes, of the husbandman terminated in bitter disappointment ! Agriculture wears not, in this our planet, the characteristics of an occupation arranged for an innocent and a fully favoured race. It displays to the eye of natural theology traces of the sentence pronounced on the first cultivator, the representative of all who were to succeed : ‘ Cursed is the ground for thy sake. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee. In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.’ It bears, in its toils and in its solitudes, plain indications that man is a sinner.

“ Observations in substance corresponding with those which have been stated respecting tillage, might be adduced concerning the care of flocks and herds. The return for labour in this branch of employment is, in the ordinary course of events, sufficient, as in agriculture, both to excite and sustain exertion, and to intimate the merciful benignity with which the Deity looks upon mankind. But the fatiguing superintendence, the watchful anxiety, the risks of loss by disease, by casualties, by malicious injury and depredation, and, in many countries, by the inroads of wild beasts, conspire in their amount to enforce the truth which has been inculcated. They inscribe the page of natural theology with the scriptural denunciation,—that the labour and the pain assigned to man are consequences of transgression.

“ Another of the principal occupations of man consists in the extraction of the mineral contents of the earth, and in the reduction of the metals into the states and the forms requisite for use. On the toil, the irksomeness, and the dangers attendant on these modes of life, it is unnecessary to enlarge. They have been discussed ; and have been shown to be deeply stamped with a penal character appropriate to a fallen and guilty race.

“ Another and a very comprehensive range of employment consists in the fabrication of manufactures. These, in correspondence with the necessities, the reasonable desires, the self-indulgence, the ingenuity, the caprices, and the luxury, of individuals, are diversified beyond enumeration. But it may be affirmed, generally, concerning manufactures in extensive demand that, in common with the occupations which have already been examined, they impose a pressure of labour, an amount of solicitude, and a risk of disappointment, such as we cannot represent to ourselves as probable in the case of beings holy in their nature, and thoroughly approved by their God. The tendency also of such manufactures is to draw together numerous operators within a small compass; to crowd them into close workshops and inadequate habitations; to injure their health by contaminated air, and their morals by contagious society.

“ Another line of exertion is constituted by trade, subdivided into its two branches, domestic traffic and foreign commerce. Both, at the same time that they are permitted in common with the modes of occupation already named to anticipate, on the whole, by the appointment of Providence, such a recompence as proves adequate to the ordinary excitement of industry, and to the acquisition of the moderate comforts of life; are marked with the penal impress of toil, anxiety, and disappointment. Natural theology still reads the sentence, ‘In the sweat of thy face, in sorrow, shalt thou eat bread.’ Vigilance is frustrated by the carelessness of associates, or profit intercepted by their iniquity. Uprightness in the dealer becomes the prey of fraud in the customer. The ship is wrecked on a distant shore, or sinks with the cargo, and with the merchant, in the ocean.”*

Numerous other examples are furnished by the author, and might be easily enlarged, so abundant is the evidence; and the whole directly connects itself with the subject under consideration. The voluntary goodness of God is not impugned by the various evils which exist in the world; for we see them

* Testimony of Nature, &c.

accounted for by the actual corrupt state of man, and by a righteous administration, by which goodness must be controlled, in order to be an attribute worthy of God ; it would otherwise be weakness, a blind passion, and not a wisely regulated affection. On the other hand, there is clearly no reason for resorting to notions of necessity, and defects in the essential nature of created things, to prove that God is good ; or, in other words, according to the hypothesis above stated, as good as the stubbornness of matter, and the necessity that vice and misery should exist, would allow. His goodness is limited by moral, not by physical, reasons ; but still, considering the globe as the residence of a fallen and perverse race, that glorious attribute is heightened in its lustre by this very circumstance ; it arrays itself before us in all its affecting attributes of mercy, pity, long-suffering, mitigation, and remission. It is goodness poured forth in the richest liberality, where moral order permits its unrestrained flow ; and it is never withheld but where the general benefit demands it. Penal acts never go beyond the rigid necessity of the case ; acts of mercy rise infinitely above all desert.

The above observations all suppose moral evil actually in the world, and infecting the whole human race ; but the origin of evil requires distinct consideration. How did moral evil arise ? and how is this circumstance compatible with the divine goodness ? However these questions may be answered, it is to be remembered that, though the answer should leave some difficulties in full force, they do not press exclusively upon the Scriptures. Independent of the Bible, the fact is, that evil exists ; and the Theist who admits the existence of a God of infinite goodness, has as large a share of the difficulty of reconciling facts and principles on this subject as the Christian, but with no advantage from that history of the introduction of sin into the world which is contained in the writings of Moses, and none from those alleviating views which are afforded by the doctrine of the redemption of man by Jesus Christ.

As to the source of evil, the following are the leading opinions which have been held :—Necessity, arising out of the

nature of things ; the Manichæan principle of duality, or the existence of a good and an evil deity ; the doctrine that God is the efficient cause or author of sin ; and finally, that evil is the result of the abuse of the moral freedom with which rational and accountable creatures are endowed. With respect to the first, as the necessity meant is independent of God, it refutes itself. If all creatures are under the influence of this necessity, and they must be under it if it arise out of the nature of things itself, no virtue could now exist : From the moment of creation the deteriorating principle must begin its operation, and go on until all good is extinguished. Nor could there be any return from vice to virtue, since the nature of things would, on that supposition, be counteracted ; which is impossible.

The second is scarcely worth notice, since no one now advocates it. This heresy, which prevailed in several parts of the Christian world from the third to the sixteenth century, seems to have been a modification of the ancient Magian doctrine superadded to some of the tenets of Christianity. Its leading principle was, that our souls were made by the good principle, and our bodies by the evil one ; these two principles being, according to Mani the founder of the sect, co-eternal and independent of each other. These notions were supposed to afford an easy explanation of the origin of evil, and on that account were zealously propagated. It was, however, overlooked by the advocates of this scheme, that it left the difficulty without any alleviation at all ; for “ it is just as repugnant to infinite goodness to create what it foresaw would be spoiled by another, as to create what would be spoiled by the constitution of its nature.”*

The dogma which makes God himself the efficient cause, or author, of sin is direct blasphemy ; and it is one of those culpable extravagances into which men are sometimes betrayed by a blind attachment to some favourite theory. This notion is found in the writings of some of the most unguarded advocates of the Calvinistic hypothesis, though now generally

* King's Origin of Evil.

abandoned by the writers of that school. A modern defender of Calvinism thus puts in his disclaimer: "God is not the author of sin. A Calvinist who says so I regard as Judas, and will have no communion with him."* The general abandonment of this notion, so offensive and blamable, renders it unnecessary to enter into its refutation. If refutation were required, it would be found in this,—that the first pair who sinned were subjected to punishment for and on account of sin; which they could not in justice have been, had not their crime been chargeable upon themselves.

The last opinion, and that which has been generally received by theologians, is, that moral evil is the result of a voluntary abuse of the freedom of the will in rational and moral agents; and that, as to the human race, the first pair sinned by choice, when the power to have continued innocent remained with them. "Why is there sin in the world? Because man was created in the image of God; because he is not mere matter, a clod of earth, a lump of clay, without sense or understand-

* Scott's Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism.—Few have been so daring, except the grosser Antinomians of ancient and modern times. The elder Calvinists, though they often made fearful approaches in their writings to this blasphemy, yet did not, openly and directly, charge God with being the author of sin. This Arminius, with great candour, acknowledges; but gives them a friendly admonition, to renounce a doctrine from which this aspersion upon the divine character may, by a good consequence, be deduced: A caution not uncalled for in the present day. *Inter omnes blasphemias quæ Deo impingi possunt, omnium est gravissima quâ author peccati statuitur Deus: Quæ ipsa non parùm exaggeratur, si addatur Deum idcirco authorem esse peccati a creaturâ commissi, ut creaturam in æternum exitium, quod illi jam ante citra respectum peccati destinaverat, damnet et deduceret; sic enim fuerit causa injustitiæ homini, ut ipsi æternam miseriam adferre posset. Hanc blasphemiam nemo Deo, quem bonum concipit, impingat: Quare etiam Manichæi, pessimi hæreticorum, quum causam mali bono Deo adscribere vererentur, alium Deum et aliud principium statuerunt, cui mali causam deputarent. Quâ de causâ, nec ullis Doctoribus Reformatarum Ecclesiarum jure impingi potest, quod Deum authorem peccati statuant ex professo; imò verissimum est illos expressè id negare, et illam calumniam contra alios egregiè confutasse. Attamen fieri potest, ut quis ex ignorantia aliquid doceat, ex quo bonâ consequentiâ deducatur, Deum per illam doctrinam statui authorem peccati. Hoc si fiat, tum quidem istius doctrinæ professoribus, non est impingendum quod Deum authorem peccati faciant, sed tantum monendi ut doctrinam istam, unde id bonâ consequentiâ deducitur, deserant et abjiciant.*

ing, but a spirit like his Creator ; a being endued not only with sense and understanding, but also with a will exerting itself in various affections.* To crown all the rest, he was endued with liberty, a power of directing his own affections and actions, a capacity of determining himself, or of choosing good and evil. Indeed, had not man been endued with this, all the rest would have been of no use. Had he not been a free, as well as an intelligent, being, his understanding would have been as incapable of holiness, or any kind of virtue, as a tree or a block of marble. And having this power, a power of choosing good and evil, he chose the latter, he chose evil. Thus ‘sin entered into the world.’”*

This account unquestionably agrees with the history of the fact of the fall and corruption of man. Like every thing else in its kind, he was pronounced “very good ;” he was placed under a law of obedience, which, if he had not had the power to observe it, would have been absurd ; and that he had also the power to violate it, is equally clear from the prohibition under which he was laid, and its accompanying penalty. The conclusion, therefore, is, that “God made man upright,” with power to remain so, and, on the contrary, to sin and fall.

Nor was this liberty to sin inconsistent with that perfect purity and moral perfection with which he was endowed at his creation. Many extravagant descriptions have been indulged in by some Divines as to the intellectual and moral endowments of the nature of the first man ; which, if admitted to the full extent, would render it difficult to conceive how he could possibly have fallen by any temptations that his circumstances allowed, or indeed how, in his case, temptation could at all exist. His state was high and glorious, but it was still a state not of reward but of trial, and his endowments and perfections were, therefore, suited to it. It is, indeed, perhaps going much too far to state, that all created rational beings, being finite, and endowed also with liberty of choice, must, under all circumstances, be liable to sin. It is argued by Archbishop

* Wesley’s Sermons.

King, that “God, though he be omnipotent, cannot make any created being absolutely perfect; for whatever is absolutely perfect must necessarily be self-existent; but it is included in the very notion of a creature, as such, not to exist of itself, but of God. An absolutely perfect creature, therefore, implies a contradiction; for it would be of itself, and not of itself, at the same time. Absolute perfection, therefore, is peculiar to God; and should he communicate his own peculiar perfection to another, that other would be God. Imperfection must, therefore, be tolerated in creatures, notwithstanding the divine omnipotence and goodness;—for contradictions are no objects of power. God, indeed, might have refrained from acting, and continued alone self-sufficient, and perfect to all eternity; but infinite goodness would by no means allow of this; and, therefore, since it obliged him to produce external things, which things could not possibly be perfect, it preferred these imperfect things to none at all; from whence it follows, that imperfection arose from the infinity of divine goodness.”*

This in part may be allowed. Imperfection must, in comparison of God, and of the creature’s own capacity of improvement, remain the character of a finite being; but it is not so clear that this imperfection must, at all times, and throughout the whole course of existence, imply liability to sin. God is free, and yet cannot “be tempted of evil.” “It is impossible for God to lie;” not for want of natural freedom, but because of an absolute moral perfection. Liberty and impeccability imply, therefore, no contradiction; and it cannot, even on rational grounds, be concluded, that a free finite moral agent may not, by the special favour of God, be placed in circumstances in which sinning is morally impossible. Revelation, undoubtedly, gives this promise to the faithful, in another state; a consummation to be effected, not by destroying their natural liberty, but by improving their moral condition. This was not, however, the case with man at his first creation, and during his abode in paradise. His state was not that of the

* Origin of Evil.

glorified, for it was probationary; yet it was inconceivably advanced above the present state of man; since, with a nature unstained and uncorrupted, it was easy for him to have maintained his moral rectitude, and to have improved and confirmed it. Obedience with him had not those clogs, and internal oppositions, and outward counteractions, which it has with us. It was, however, a state which required watchfulness, and effort, and prayer, and denial of the appetites and passions, since Eve fell by her appetite, and Adam by his passion; and slight as, in the first instance, every external influence which tended to depress the energy of the spiritual life, and lead man from God, might be, and easy to be resisted; it might become a step to a further defection, and the nucleus of a fatal habit. Thus, says Bishop Butler, with his accustomed acuteness, "Mankind, and perhaps all finite creatures, from the very constitution of their nature, before habits of virtue, are deficient, and in danger of deviating from what is right; and, therefore, stand in need of virtuous habits, for a security against this danger. For, together with the general principle of moral understanding, we have in our inward frame various affections towards particular external objects. These affections are naturally, and of right, subject to the government of the moral principle, as to the occasions upon which they may be gratified; as to the times, degrees, and manner, in which the objects of them may be pursued; but then the principle of virtue can neither excite them, nor prevent their being excited. On the contrary, they are naturally felt, when the objects of them are present to the mind, not only before all consideration whether they can be obtained by lawful means, but after it is found they cannot. For the natural objects of affection continue so; the necessities, conveniences, and pleasures of life, remain naturally desirable, though they cannot be obtained innocently; nay, though they cannot possibly be obtained at all. And when the objects of any affection whatever cannot be obtained without unlawful means, but may be obtained by them, such affection, through its being excited, and its continuance some time in the mind, (be it as innocent as it is natural and necessary,) yet cannot but be

conceived to have a tendency to incline persons to venture upon such unlawful means ; and, therefore, must be conceived as putting them in some danger of it. Now, what is the general security against this danger, against their actually deviating from right ? As the danger is, so also must the security be, from within ; from the practical principle of virtue. And the strengthening or improving this principle, considered as practical, or as a principle of action, will lessen the danger, or increase the security against it. And this moral principle is capable of improvement, by proper discipline and exercise ; by recollecting the practical impressions which example and experience have made upon us ; and, instead of following humour and mere inclination, by continually attending to the equity and right of the case, in whatever we are engaged, be it in greater or less matters, and accustoming ourselves always to act upon it ; as being itself the just and natural motive of action, and as this moral course of behaviour must necessarily, under divine government, be our final interest. Thus the principle of virtue, improved into habit, of which improvement we are thus capable, will plainly be, in proportion to the strength of it, a security against the danger which finite creatures are in, from the very nature of propension, or particular affections.

“ From these things we may observe,—and it will farther show this our natural and original need of being improved by discipline,—how it comes to pass, that creatures made upright, fall ; and that those who preserve their uprightness, by so doing, raise themselves to a more secure state of virtue. To say that the former is accounted for by the nature of liberty, is to say no more than that an event’s actually happening is accounted for by a mere possibility of its happening. But it seems distinctly conceivable from the very nature of particular affections or propensions. For, suppose creatures intended for such a particular state of life, for which such propensions were necessary : Suppose them endued with such propensions, together with moral understanding, as well including a practical sense of virtue, as a speculative perception of it ; and that all these several prin-

ciples, both natural and moral, forming an inward constitution of mind, were in the most exact proportion possible, that is, in a proportion the most exactly adapted to their intended state of life; such creatures would be made upright, or finitely perfect. Now, particular propensions, from their very nature, must be felt, the objects of them being present; though they cannot be gratified at all, or not with the allowance of the moral principle. But if they can be gratified without its allowance, or by contradicting it; then they must be conceived to have some tendency, in how low a degree soever, yet some tendency, to induce persons to such forbidden gratification. This tendency, in some one particular propension, may be increased, by the greater frequency of occasions naturally exciting it, than of occasions exciting others. The least voluntary indulgence in forbidden circumstances, though but in thought, will increase this wrong tendency; and may increase it further, till, peculiar conjunctures perhaps conspiring, it becomes effect; and danger of deviating from right, ends in actual deviation from it;—a danger necessarily arising from the very nature of propension; and which, therefore, could not have been prevented, though it might have been escaped, or got innocently through. The case would be, as if we were to suppose a straight path marked out for a person, in which such a degree of attention would keep him steady; but if he would not attend in this degree, any one of a thousand objects, catching his eye, might lead him out of it. Now, it is impossible to say, how much even the first full overt act of irregularity might disorder the inward constitution, unsettle the adjustments, and alter the proportions which formed it, and in which the uprightness of its make consisted; but repetition of irregularities would produce habits. And thus the constitution would be spoiled; and creatures made upright become corrupt and depraved in their settled character, proportionably to their repeated irregularities in occasional acts. But, on the contrary, these creatures might have improved and raised themselves to an higher and more secure state of virtue, by the contrary behaviour; by steadily following the moral principle, supposed to be one

part of their nature ; and thus withstanding that unavoidable danger of defection which necessarily arose from propension, the other part of it. For, by thus preserving their integrity for some time, their danger would lessen ; since propensions, by being inured to submit, would do it more easily and of course ; and their security against this lessening danger would increase ; since the moral principle would gain additional strength by exercise ; both which things are implied in the notion of virtuous habits. Thus, then, vicious indulgence is not only criminal in itself, but also depraves the inward constitution and character. And virtuous self-government is not only right in itself, but also improves the inward constitution or character ; and may improve it to such a degree, that, though we should suppose it impossible for particular affections to be absolutely coincident with the moral principle, and consequently should allow, that such creatures as have been above supposed would for ever remain defectible ; yet their danger of actually deviating from right may be almost infinitely lessened, and they fully fortified against what remains of it,—if that may be called ‘ danger,’ against which there is an adequate effectual security. But still, this their higher perfection may continue to consist in habits of virtue formed in a state of discipline, and this their more complete security remain to proceed from them. And thus it is plainly conceivable, that creatures without blemish, as they came out of the hands of God, may be in danger of going wrong ; and so may stand in need of the security of virtuous habits, additional to the moral principle wrought into their natures by him. That which is the ground of their danger, or their want of security, may be considered as a deficiency in them, to which virtuous habits are the natural supply. And as they are naturally capable of being raised and improved by discipline, it may be a thing fit and requisite, that they should be placed in circumstances with an eye to it ; in circumstances peculiarly fitted to be, to them, a state of discipline for their improvement in virtue.” *

* Analogy.

It is easy, therefore, to conceive, without supposing that moral liberty, in all cases, necessarily supposes liability to commit sin, how a perfectly pure and upright Being might be capable of disobedience, though continued submission to God and to his law was not only possible, but practicable, without painful and difficult effort. To be in a state of trial, the moral as well as the natural freedom to choose evil was essential; and as far as this fact bears upon the question of the divine goodness, it resolves itself into this, "Whether it was inconsistent with that attribute of the divine nature, to endow man with this liberty, or, in other words, to place him in a state of trial on earth, before his admission into that state from which the possibility of evil is for ever excluded." To this, unassisted reason could frame no answer. By the aid of revelation we are assured, that benevolence is so absolutely the motive and the end of the divine providence, that thus to dispose of man, and, consequently, to permit his voluntary fall, is consistent with it; but in what manner it is so, is involved in obscurity; and the fact being established, we may well be content to wait for the developement of that great process which shall "justify the ways of God to man," without indulging in speculations which, for want of all the facts of the case before us, must always be to a great extent without foundation, and may even seriously mislead. This we know, that the entrance of sin into the world has given occasion for the tenderest displays of the divine goodness, in the gift of the great Restorer; and opened, to all who will avail themselves of the blessing, the gate to "glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life." The observations of Doddridge on this subject have a commendable modesty:—

"It will still be demanded, 'Why was moral evil permitted?' To this it is generally answered, that it was the result of natural liberty; and it was fit that, among all the other classes and orders of beings, some should be formed possessed of this, as it conduces to the harmony of the universe, and to the beautiful variety of beings in it. Yet still it is replied, 'Why did not God prevent this abuse of liberty?' One would not willingly say, that he is not able to do it, with-

out violating the nature of his creatures ; nor is it possible that any should prove this. It is commonly said, that he permitted it, in order to extract from thence greater good. But it may be further queried, ‘ Could he not have produced that greater good without such a means ? Could he not have secured among all his creatures universal good and universal happiness, in full consistency with the liberty he had given them ? ’ I acknowledge I see no way of answering this question but by saying, He had, indeed, a natural power of doing it, but that he saw it better not to do it, though the reasons upon which it appeared preferable to him are entirely unknown to us.”*

The mercy of God is not a distinct attribute of his nature, but a mode of his goodness. It is the disposition, whereby he is inclined to succour those who are in misery, and to pardon those who have offended. “ In Scripture language,” says Archbishop Tillotson, “ it is usually set forth to us by the expressions of pity and compassion ; which is an affection that causes a sensible commotion and disturbance in us, upon the apprehension of some great evil, either threatening or oppressing another ; pursuant to which, God is said to be grieved and afflicted for the miseries of men. But though God be pleased in this manner to convey an idea of his mercy and tenderness to us, yet we must take heed how we clothe the divine nature with the infirmities of human passions : We must not measure the perfections of God by the expressions of his condescension ; and, because he stoops to our weakness, level him to our infirmities. When, therefore, God is said to pity us, or to be grieved at our afflictions, we must be careful to remove the imperfection of the passion, the commotion and disturbance that it occasions ; and then we may conceive as strongly of the divine mercy and compassion as we please, and that it exerts itself in a very tender and affectionate manner.

“ And, therefore, the holy Scriptures not only tell us, that ‘ the Lord our God is a merciful God,’ but that ‘ he is the

Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort ;' that he ' delights in mercy,' ' waits to be gracious,' ' rejoices over us to do us good,' and ' crowneth us with his loving-kindness : ' To denote the greatness and continuance of this affection, they not only tell us, that ' his mercy is above the heavens ;' that it extends itself ' over all his works,' ' is laid up in store for a thousand generations, and is to endure for ever and ever : ' To express the intenseness of it, they not only tell us of the ' multitude of his tender mercies,' the ' sounding of his bowels,' the ' relentings of his heart,' and the ' kindlings of his repentance ;' but, to give us as sensible an idea as possible of the compassions of God, they compare them to the tenderest affections among men ; to that of a father towards his children : ' As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him ;' nay, to the compassion of a mother towards her infant : ' Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb ? Yea, she may forget ;' it is possible, though very unlikely ; but, though a mother may become unnatural, yet God cannot prove unmerciful.

" In short, the Scriptures everywhere magnify the mercy of God, and speak of it with all possible advantage, as if the divine nature, which does in all perfections excel every other thing, did in this perfection excel itself : And of this we have a farther conviction, if we lift but up our eyes to God, and then, turning them upon ourselves, begin to consider how many evils and miseries, that every day we are exposed to, by his preventing mercy are hindered, or, when they were coming upon us, stopped or turned another way. How oft our punishment has he deferred by his forbearing mercy ; or, when it was necessary for our chastisement, mitigated and made light ! How oft we have been supported in our afflictions by his comforting mercy, and visited with the light of his countenance, in the exigencies of our soul, and the gloominess of despair ! How oft we have been supplied by his relieving mercy in our wants ; and, when there was no hand to succour, and no soul to pity us, his arm has been stretched out to lift us from the mire and clay, and, by a providential train of events, brought

about our sustenance and support ! And, above all, how daily, how hourly, how minutely we offend against him ; and yet, by the power of his pardoning mercy, we are still alive ! For, considering the multitude and heinousness of our provocations, ‘it is of his mercy alone that we are not consumed, and because his compassions fail not. Whoso is wise will ponder these things, and he will understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.’ ”*

* Sermons.

CHAPTER VII.

Attributes of God :—Holiness.

IN creatures, holiness is conformity to the will of God, as expressed in his laws ; and consists in abstinence from every thing which has been comprehended under the general term of “sin,” and in the habit and practice of righteousness. Both these terms are properly understood to include various principles, affections, and acts, which, considered separately, are regarded as vices or virtues ; and, collectively, as constituting a holy or a polluted character. Our conception of holiness in creatures, both in its negative and its positive import, is, therefore, explicit ; it is determined by the will of God. But when we speak of God, we speak of a Being who is a law to himself, and whose conduct cannot be referred to a higher authority than his own. This circumstance has given rise to various opinions on the subject of the holiness of the divine Being, and to different modes of stating this glorious attribute of his moral nature. But without conducting the reader into the profitless question, “whether there is a fixed and unalterable nature and fitness of things, independent of the divine will,” on the one hand ; or, on the other, “whether good and evil have their foundation, not in the nature of things, but only in the divine will, which makes them such ;” there is a method, less direct it may be, but more satisfactory, of assisting our thoughts on this subject.

It is certain that various affections and actions have been enjoined upon all rational creatures under the general name of “righteousness,” and that their contraries have been prohibited. It is a matter also of constant experience and observation, that the good of society is promoted only by the one, and injured by the other ; and also that every individual derives, by the very constitution of his nature, benefit and

happiness from rectitude ; injury and misery from vice. The constitution of human nature is, therefore, an indication, that the Maker and Ruler of men formed them with the intent that they should avoid vice, and practise virtue ; and that the former is the object of his aversion ; the latter, of his regard. On this principle all the laws, which, in his legislative character, Almighty God has enacted for the government of mankind, have been constructed. “ The law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good.” In the administration of the world, where God is so often seen in his judicial capacity, the punishments which are inflicted, indirectly or immediately, upon men, clearly tend to discourage and prevent the practice of evil. “ Above all, the Gospel, that last and most perfect revelation of the divine will, instead of giving the professors of it any allowance to sin, because grace has abounded, (which is an injurious imputation cast upon it by ignorant and impious minds,) its chief design is to establish that great principle, God’s moral purity, and to manifest his abhorrence of sin, and inviolable regard to purity and virtue in his reasonable creatures. It was for this he sent his Son into the world to turn men from their iniquities, and bring them back to the paths of righteousness. For this, the blessed Jesus submitted to the deepest humiliations and most grievous sufferings. ‘ He gave himself,’ as St. Paul speaks, ‘ for his church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, but that it should be holy and without blemish ;’ or, as it is elsewhere expressed, ‘ he gave himself for us, to redeem us from our iniquities, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.’ In all this, he is said to have done the will of his Father, and glorified him ; that is, restored and promoted in the world the cause of virtue and righteousness, which is the glory of God. And his life was the visible image of the divine sanctity, proposed as a familiar example to mankind ; for he was ‘ holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.’ He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. And as Christianity appears, by the character of its Author, and by his actions and sufferings, to be a

designed evidence of the holiness of God, or of his aversion to sin, and his gracious desire to turn men from it ; so the institution itself is perfectly pure, it contains the clearest and most lively descriptions of moral virtue, and the strongest motives to the practice of it. It promises, as from God, the kindest assistance to men, for making the Gospel effectual to renew them in the spirit of their minds ; and to reform their lives, by his Spirit sent down from heaven, on purpose to convince the world of sin, and righteousness, and judgment ; to enlighten them who were in darkness, and turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just ; to strengthen its converts to true religion, unto all obedience, and long-suffering, and patience ; to enable them to resist temptation ; to abound in the fruits of righteousness, and perfect holiness in the fear of God.”*

Since, then, it is so manifest that “ the Lord loveth righteousness, and hateth iniquity,” it must be necessarily concluded, that this preference to the one, and hatred of the other, flow from some principle in his very nature ; “ that he is the righteous Lord,” “ of purer eyes than to behold evil,” “ one who cannot look upon iniquity.” This principle is holiness ; an attribute which, in the most emphatic manner, is assumed by himself, and attributed to him, both by adoring angels in their choirs, and by inspired saints in their worship. He is, by his own designation, “ the Holy One of Israel ;” the seraphs, in the vision of the Prophet, cry continually, “ Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory,” thus summing up all his glories in this sole moral perfection. The language of the sanctuary on earth is borrowed from that of heaven : “ Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name ? for thou only art holy.”

If, then, there is this principle in the divine mind, which leads him to prescribe, love, and reward truth, justice, benevolence, and every other virtuous affection and habit in his creatures which we sum up in the term “ holiness ;” and to forbid, restrain, and punish their opposites ; that principle, being essential in him, a part of his very nature and Godhead,

must be the spring and guide of his own conduct; and thus we conceive without difficulty of the essential rectitude or holiness of the divine nature, and the absolutely pure and righteous character of his administration. "In him there can be no malice, or envy, or hatred, or revenge, or pride, or cruelty, or tyranny, or injustice, or falsehood, or unfaithfulness; and if there be any thing beside which implies sin, and vice, and moral imperfection, holiness signifies that the divine nature is at an infinite distance from it."* Nor are we only to conceive of this quality negatively, but positively, also, as "the actual perpetual rectitude of all his volitions, and all the works and actions which are consequent thereupon; and an eternal propension thereto, and love thereof, by which it is altogether impossible to that will that it should ever vary."†

This attribute of holiness exhibits itself in two great branches,—justice and truth; which are sometimes also treated of as separate attributes.

Justice, in its principle, is holiness, and is often expressed by the term "righteousness;" but when it relates to matters of government, the universal rectitude of the divine nature shows itself in inflexible regard to what is right, and in an opposition to wrong, which cannot be warped or altered in any degree whatever: "Just and right is He." Justice in God, when it is not regarded as universal, but particular, is either legislative or judicial.

Legislative justice determines man's duty, and binds him to the performance of it; and also defines the rewards and punishments, which shall be due upon the creature's obedience or disobedience. This branch of divine justice has many illustrations in Scripture. The principle of it is that absolute right which God has to the entire and perpetual obedience of the creatures which he has made. This right is unquestionable; and, in pursuance of it, all moral agents are placed under law, and are subject to rewards or punishments. None are excepted. Those who have not God's revealed law have

* Tillotson.

† Howe.

a law "written on their hearts," and are a "law unto themselves." The original law of obedience, given to man, was a law, not only to the first man, but to the whole human race, for if, as the Apostle has laid it down, "the whole world," comprising both Jews and Gentiles, is "guilty before God," then the whole world is under a law of obedience. In this respect God is just in asserting his own right to be obeyed, and in claiming, from the creature he has made and preserved, the obedience which in strict righteousness he owes; but this claim is strictly limited, and never goes beyond justice into rigour. "He is not a hard master, reaping where he has not sown, and gathering where he has not strewed." His law is, however, unchangeable in its demand upon man for universal obedience, because man is considered in it as a creature capable of yielding that obedience; but when the human race became corrupt, means of pardon, consistent with righteous government, were introduced, by the atonement for sin made by the death of Jesus Christ, received by faith; and supernatural aid was put within their reach, by which the evil of their nature might be removed, and the disposition and the power to obey the law of God imparted. The case of heathen nations to whom the Gospel is not yet preached, may hereafter be considered. It involves some difficulties; but it is enough for us to know, that "the Judge of the whole earth will do right;" and that this shall be made apparent to all creatures, when the facts of the whole case shall be disclosed, "in the day of the revelation of Jesus Christ." Judicial justice, more generally termed "distributive justice," is that which respects rewards and punishments. God renders to men according to their works. This branch of justice is said to be "remunerative," or "præmiative," when he rewards the obedient; and "vindictive," when he punishes the guilty. With respect to the first, it is indeed reward, properly speaking, not of debt, but of grace; for, antecedently, God cannot be a debtor to his creatures; but, since he binds himself by engagements in his law, ("This do, and thou shalt live,") express or tacit, or attaches a particular promise of reward to some particular duty, it becomes a part of justice to perform the engagement. On this principle,

also, St. Paul says, “ God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and labour of love ;” (Heb. vi. 10 ;) and St. John says, “ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.” (1 John i. 9.) “ Even this has justice in it. It is, upon one account, the highest act of mercy imaginable, considering with what liberty and freedom the course and method were settled wherein sins come to be pardoned ; but it is an act of justice also, inasmuch as it is the observation of a method to which he had bound himself, and from which afterwards, therefore, he cannot depart, cannot vary.”*

Vindictive or punitive justice consists in the infliction of punishment. It renders the punishment of unpardoned sin certain, so that no criminal shall escape ; and it guarantees the exact proportion of punishment to the nature and circumstances of the offence. Both these circumstances are marked in numerous passages of Scripture, the testimony of which on this subject may be summed up in the words of Elihu : “ For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways ; yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.”

What is called “ commutative justice” relates to the exchange of one thing for another of equal value, and is called forth by contracts, bargains, and similar transactions among men ; but this branch of justice belongs not to God, because of his dignity. “ He hath no equal, there are none of the same order with him to make exchanges with him, or to transfer rights to him for any rights transferred from him.” “ Our righteousness extendeth not to him, nor can man be profitable to his Maker.” The whole world of creatures is challenged and humbled by the question, “ Who hath given him any thing, and it shall be recompensed to him again ?”

Strict impartiality is, however, a prominent character in the justice of God : “ There is no respect of persons with God.” As on the one hand he hateth nothing which he has made, and cannot be influenced by prejudices and pre-

* Howe's Posthumous Works.

possessions ; so, on the other, he can fear no one, however powerful. No being is necessary to him, even as an agent to fulfil his plans, that he should overlook his offences ; no combination of beings can resist the steady and equal march of his administration. The majesty of his Godhead sets him infinitely above all such considerations. “The Lord our God is the God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, neither taketh reward.” “He accepteth not the person of Princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor ; for they all are the work of his hands.”

There are, however, many circumstances in the administration of the affairs of the world, which appear irreconcilable to that strict and exact exercise of justice we have ascribed to God, as the supreme Ruler. These have sometimes been urged as objections ; and the writers of systems of “natural religion” have often found it difficult to answer them. That has arisen from their excluding from such systems, as much as possible, the light of revelation ; and on that account, much more than from the real difficulties of the cases adduced, it is, that their reasonings are often unsatisfactory. Yet if man is, in point of fact, under a dispensation of grace and mercy, that is now in perfect accordance with the strictest justice of God’s moral government, neither his circumstances, nor the conduct of God towards him, can ever be judged of by systems which are constructed expressly on the principle of excluding all such views as are peculiar to the Scriptures. In attempting it, the cause of truth has been injured rather than served ; because a feeble argument has been often wielded, when a powerful one was at hand ; and the answer to infidel objectors has been partial, lest it should be said, that the full and sufficient reply was furnished, not by human reason, but by the reason, the wisdom, of God himself, as embodied in his word. This is, however, little better than a solemn manner of trifling with truths which so deeply concern men.

But let the two facts which respect the relations of man to God as the Governor of the world, and which stamp their character upon his administration, be both taken into account ;

—that God is a just ruler; and yet that offending man is under a dispensation of mercy, which provides, through the sacrifice of Christ meritoriously, and his own repentance and faith instrumentally, for his forgiveness, and for the healing of his corrupted nature; and a strong, and generally a most satisfactory, light is thrown upon those cases which have been supposed most irreconcilable to an exact and righteous government.

The doctrine of a future and general judgment, which alone explains so many difficulties in the divine administration, is grounded solely on the doctrine of redemption. Under an administration of strict justice, punishment must have followed offence without delay. This is indicated in the sanction of the first law: “In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;”—a threat which, we may learn from Scripture, would have been executed fully but for the immediate introduction of the redeeming scheme. If we suppose the first pair to have preserved their innocence, and any of their descendants at any period to have become disobedient, they must have borne their own iniquity; and punishment, to death and excision, must instantly have followed: For, in the case of a divine government, where the parties are God and a creature, every sin must be considered capital; since the penalty of death is, in every case, the sentence of the divine law against transgression. Under such an administration, no reason would seem to exist for a general judgment at the close of the world’s duration. That has its reason in the circumstances of trial in which men are placed by the introduction of a method of recovery. Justice, in connexion with a sufficient atonement, admits of the suspension of punishment for offence, of long-suffering, of the application of means of repentance and conversion; and that, throughout the whole term of natural life. The judgment, the examination, and public exhibition of the use or abuse of this patience, and of those means, is deferred to one particular day, in which he who now offers grace shall administer justice, strict and unsparing. This world is not the appointed place of final judgment, under the new dispensation; the space of human

life on earth is not the time appointed for it; and however difficult it may be, without taking these things into consideration, to trace the manifestations of justice in God's moral government, or to reconcile certain circumstances to the character of a righteous governor, by their aid the difficulty is removed. Justice, as the principle of his administration, has a sufficiently awful manifestation in the miseries which in this life are attached to vice; in the sorrows and sufferings to which a corrupted race is subjected; and, above all, in the satisfaction exacted from the Son of God himself, as the price of human pardon: But, since the final punishment of persevering and obstinate offenders is, by God's own proclamation, postponed to "a day appointed, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained," and since also the final rewards of the reconciled and recovered part of mankind are equally delayed, it is folly to look for a perfect exercise of justice in the present state.

We may learn, therefore, from this,—

1. That it is no impeachment of a righteous government, that external prosperity should be the lot of great offenders. It may be part of a gracious administration to bring them to repentance by favour; or it may be designed to make their fall and final punishment more marked; or it may be intended to teach the important lesson of the slight value of outward advantages, separate from holy habits and a thankful mind.

2. That it is not inconsistent with rectitude, that even those who are forgiven and reconciled, those who are become dear to God, should be afflicted and oppressed; since their defects and omissions may require chastisement, and since also these are made the means of their excelling in virtue, of aiding their heavenly-mindedness, and of qualifying them for a better state.

3. That as the administration under which man is placed is one of grace in harmony with justice, the dispensation of what is matter of pure favour may have great variety, and be even very unequal, without any impeachment of justice. The

parable of the labourers in the vineyard seems designed to illustrate this: To all, God will be able, at the reckoning at the close of the day, to say, "I do thee no wrong;" no principle of justice will be violated; it will then appear, that "he reaps not where he has not sown." But the other principle will have been as strikingly made manifest, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?"

With nations the case is otherwise. Their rewards and punishments, being of a civil nature, may be fully administered in this life; and, as bodies politic, they have no posthumous existence. Reward and retribution, in their case, have been, therefore, in all ages, visible and striking; and in the conduct of the great Ruler to them, "his judgments" are said to be "abroad in the earth." In succession, every vicious nation has perished; and always by means so marked, and often so singular, as to bear upon them a broad and legible punitive character. With collective bodies of men, indeed, the government of God in this world is greatly concerned; and that both in their civil and religious character; with churches, so to speak, as well as with states; and, in consequence, the cases of individuals (as all cannot be of equal guilt or innocence) must often be mixed and confounded. These apparent, and sometimes, perhaps, from the operation of a general system, real, irregularities can be compensated to the good, or overtaken as to the wicked, in their personal character in another state, to which we are constantly directed to look forward, as to the great and ample comment upon all that is obscure in this.

For the discoveries of the word of God as to this attribute of the divine nature, we owe the most grateful acknowledgments to its Author. Without this revelation, indeed, the conceptions which Heathens form of the justice with which the world is administered, are exceedingly imperfect and unsettled. The course of the world is to them a flow without a direction, movement without control; and gloom and impatience must often be the result: * Taught as we are, we see nothing loose

* The accomplished Quintilian may be given as an instance of this, and also of what the Apostle calls their sorrowing "without hope." In pathetic-

or disjointed in the system. A firm hand grasps, and controls, and directs the whole. This governing Power is also manifested to us as our Friend, our Father, and our God, delighting in mercy, and resorting only to severity when we ourselves oblige the reluctant measure. On these firm principles of justice and mercy, truth and goodness, every thing in private as well as public is conducted ; and from these stable foundations, no change, no convulsion, can shake off the vast frame of human interests and concerns.

Allied to justice, as justice is allied to holiness, is the truth of God ; which manifestation of the moral character of God has also an eminent place in the inspired volume. His paths are said to be “mercy and truth ;” his words, ways, and judgments, to be true and righteous. “His mercy is great to the heavens, and his truth to the clouds.” “He keepeth truth for ever.” “The strength of Israel will not lie.” “It is impossible that God should lie.” “He is the faithful God which keepeth covenant and mercy : He abideth faithful.” From these and other passages, it is plain that truth is contemplated by the sacred writers in its two great branches, veracity and faithfulness ; both of which they ascribe to God, with an emphasis and vigour of phrase that show at once their belief of the facts, their trust and confidence in them, and the important place which they considered the existence of such a Being to hold in a system of revealed religion. It forms, indeed, the basis of all religion, to know the true God, and to know that God is true. In the Bible this must of necessity be fully and satisfactorily declared, because of the other discoveries which it makes of the divine nature. If it reveals to us, as the only living and true God, a Being of knowledge infinitely perfect, then he himself cannot be deceived ; and his knowledge is true, because conformable to the exact and per-

ally lamenting the death of his wife and sons, he tells us, that he had lost all taste for study, and that every good parent would condemn him, if he employed his tongue for any other purpose than to accuse the gods, and testify against a providence : *Quis enim bonus parens mihi ignoscat, ac non oderit hanc animi mei firmitatem, si quis in me est alius usus vocis, quàm ut incusem deos, superstes omnium meorum, nullam terras despicere providentiam tester ?*—INSTIT., lib. vi.

fect reality of things. If he is holy, without spot or defect, then his word must be conformable to his knowledge, will, and intention ; on this account, he cannot deceive others. In all his dealings with us, he uses a perfect sincerity, and represents things as they are, whether laws to be obeyed, or doctrines to be believed. All is perfect and absolute veracity in his communications. “ God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”

His faithfulness relates to his engagements, and is confirmed to us with the same certainty as his veracity. If he enters into engagements, promises, and covenants, he acts with perfect freedom. These are acts of grace to which he is under no compulsion ; and they can never, therefore, be reluctant engagements which he would wish to violate, because they flow from a ceaseless and changeless inclination to bestow benefits, and a delight in the exercise of goodness. They can never be made in haste or unadvisedly ; for the whole case of his creatures to the end of time is before him, and no circumstances can arise which to him are new or unforeseen. He cannot want the power to fulfil his promises, because he is omnipotent ; (he cannot promise beyond his ability to make good, because his fulness is infinite) ; finally, “ he cannot deny himself,” because “ he is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent ;” and thus every promise which he has made is guaranteed, as well by his natural attributes of wisdom, power, and sufficiency, as by his perfect moral rectitude. In this manner the true God stands contrasted with the “ lying vanities” of the heathen deities ; and, in this his character of truth, the everlasting foundations of his religion are laid. That changes not, because the doctrines taught in it are in themselves true without error, and can never be displaced by new and better discoveries ; it fails not, because every gracious promise must by him be accomplished ; and thus the religion of the Bible continues from age to age, and from day to day, as much a matter of personal experience as it ever was. In its doctrines, it can never become an antiquated theory ; for truth is eternal. In its practical application it can never become foreign to man ; for it enters now,

and must ever enter, into his concerns, his duties, his hopes; and comforts, to the end of time. We know what is true as an object of belief, because the God of truth has declared it, and we know what is faithful, and, therefore, the object of unlimited trust, because "he is faithful that hath promised." Whether, therefore, in the language of the old Divines, we consider God's word as "declaratory or promissory,"—declaring "how things are or how they shall be," or promising to us certain benefits,—its absolute truth is confirmed to us by the truth of the divine nature itself; it claims the undivided assent of our judgment, and the unsuspicious trust of our hearts; and presents, at once, a sure resting-place for our opinions, and a faithful object for our confidence.

Such are the adorable attributes of the ever-blessed God which are distinctly revealed to us in his own word; in addition to which, there are other and more general ascriptions of excellence to him, which though, from the greatness of the subject, and the imperfection of human conception and human language, they are vague and indeterminate, serve, for this very reason, to heighten our conceptions of him, and to set before the humbled and awed spirit of man an overwhelming height and depth of majesty and glory.

God is perfect. We are thus taught to ascribe to him every natural and moral excellence we can conceive; and when we have done that, we are to conclude, that if any nameless and unconceived glory be necessary to complete a perfection which excludes all deficiency, which is capable of no excess, which is unalterably full and complete,—it exists in him. Every attribute in him is perfect in its kind, and is the most elevated of its kind. It is perfect in its degree, not falling in the least below the standard of the highest excellence, either in our conceptions, or those of angels, or in the possible nature of things itself. These various perfections are systematically distributed into incommunicable, as self-existence, immensity, eternity, omniscience, omnipotence, and the like, because there is nothing in creatures which could be signified by such names; no common properties of which these could be the common terms, and, therefore, they remain peculiarly and

exclusively proper to God himself; and communicable, such as wisdom, goodness, holiness, justice, and truth, because, under the same names, they may be spoken of him and of us, though in a sense infinitely inferior. But all these perfections form the one glorious perfection and fulness of excellence which constitutes the divine nature. They are not accidents, separable from that nature, or superadded to it; but they are his very nature itself, which is and must be perfectly wise and good, holy and just, almighty and all-sufficient. This idea of positive perfection, which runs through the whole of Scripture, warrants us also to conclude, that where negative attributes are ascribed to God, they imply always a positive excellence. Immortality implies "an undecaying fulness of life;" and when God is said to be invisible, the meaning is, that he is a Being of too high an excellency, of too glorious and transcendent a nature, to be subject to the observation of sense.

God is all-sufficient. This is another of those declarations of Scripture which exalt our views of God into a mysterious, unbounded, and undefined amplitude of grandeur. It is sufficiency, absolute plenitude and fulness; from himself, eternally rising out of his own perfection; for himself, so that he is all to himself, and depends upon no other being; and for all that communication, however large and however lasting, on which the whole universe of existent creatures depends, and from which future creations, if any take place, can only be supplied. The same vast thought is expressed by St. Paul, in the phrase, "all in all," which, as Howe justly observes,* "is a most godlike phrase, wherein God doth speak of himself with divine greatness and majestic sense. Here is an 'all in all;' an 'all' comprehended, and an 'all' comprehending; one create and the other uncreate; the former contained in the latter, and lost like a drop in the ocean, in the all-comprehending, all-pervading, all-sustaining, uncreated fulness." "In him we live, and move, and have our being."

God is unsearchable. All we see or hear of him is faint

* Posthumous Works.

and shadowy manifestation. Beyond the highest glory, there is yet an unpierced and unapproached light, a track of intellectual and moral splendour untravelled by the thoughts of the contemplating and adoring spirits who are nearest to his throne. The manifestation of this nature of God, never fully to be revealed, because infinite, is represented as constituting the reward and the felicity of heaven. This is "to see God." This is "to be for ever with the Lord." This is to behold his glory as in a glass, with unveiled face, and to be changed into his image, from glory to glory, in boundless progression and infinite approximation. Yet, after all, it will be as true, after countless ages spent in heaven itself, as in the present state, that none by "searching can find out God," that is, "to perfection." He will then be "a God that hideth himself;" and, widely as the illumination may extend, "clouds and darkness will still be round about him." "His glorious name is exalted above all blessing and praise." "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head over all." "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen."

CHAPTER VIII.

God :—The Trinity in Unity.

WE now approach this great mystery of our faith, for the declaration of which we are so exclusively indebted to the Scriptures, that not only is it incapable of proof *à priori* ; but it derives no direct confirmatory evidence from the existence, and wise and orderly arrangement, of the works of God. It stands, however, on the unshaken foundation of his own word, that testimony which he has given of himself in both Testaments ; and if we see no traces of it, as of his simple being and operative perfections, in the works of his creative power and wisdom, the reason is that creation in itself could not be the medium of manifesting or of illustrating it. Some, it is true, have thought the trinity of divine Persons in the unity of the Godhead, demonstrable by natural reason. Poiret and others, formerly, and Professor Kidd, recently, have all attempted to prove, not that this doctrine implies a contradiction, but that it cannot be denied without a contradiction ; and that it is impossible but that the divine nature should so exist. The former endeavours to prove that neither creation, nor indeed any action in the Deity, was possible but from this tri-unity. But his arguments, were they adduced, would scarcely be considered satisfactory, even by those whose belief in the doctrine is most settled. The latter argues from notions of duration and space, which themselves have not hitherto been satisfactorily established, and, if they had, would yield but slight assistance in such an investigation. This, however, may be said respecting such attempts,—they at least show, that men, quite as eminent for strength of understanding, and logical acuteness, as any who have decried the doctrine of the Trinity as irrational and contradictory, find no such opposition in it to the reason or to the nature of things,

as the latter pretend to be almost self-evident. The very opposite conclusions reached by the parties, when they reason the matter by the light of their own intellect only, is a circumstance, it is true, which lessens our confidence in pretended rational demonstrations ; but it gives neither party a right to assume any thing at the expense of the other. Such failures ought, indeed, to produce in us a proper sense of the inadequacy of human powers to search the deep things of God ; and they forcibly exhibit the necessity of divine teaching in every thing which relates to such subjects, and demand from us an entire docility of mind, where God himself has condescended to become our Instructor.

More objectionable than the attempts which have been made to prove this mystery by mere argument, are pretensions to explain it ; whether, by what logicians call “immanent acts” of Deity upon himself, from whence arise the relations of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; or by assuming that the Trinity is the same as the three “essential primalities, or active powers in the divine essence,—power, intellect, and will,”* for which they invent a kind of personification ; or, by alleging that the three Persons are, *Deus seipsum intelligens, Deus a seipso intellectus, et Deus a seipso amatus*. All such hypotheses either darken the counsel they would explain, by “words without knowledge ;” or assume principles which, when expanded into their full import, are wholly inconsistent with the doctrine as it is announced in the Scriptures, and which their advocates have professed to receive.

It is a more innocent theory, that types and symbols of the mystery of the Trinity are found in various natural objects. From the Fathers, many have illustrated the trinity of Persons in the same divine nature, by the analogy of three or more men having each the same human nature ; by the union of two natures of man in one person ; by the trinity of intellectual primary faculties in the soul,—power, intellect, and will, *posse, scire, velle*, which they say are not three parts of the soul, “it being the whole soul *quæ potest, quæ intelligit, et*

* *Potentia, Intellectus, et Voluntas*, or *Potentia, Sapientia, et Amor*.—
CAMPANELLA, RICHARDUS, and others.

quæ vult ;” by motion, light, and heat in the sun ; with many others. Of these instances, however, we may observe that, even granting them all to be philosophically true, they cannot be proofs ; they are seldom, or but very inapplicably, illustrations ; and the best use to which they have ever been put, or of which they are indeed capable, is to silence the absurd objections which are sometimes drawn from things merely natural and finite, by answers which natural and finite things supply ; though both the objections and the answers often prove, that the subject in question is too elevated and peculiar to be approached by such analogies. Of these illustrations, as they have been sometimes called, Baxter, though inclined to make too much of them, well enough observes, “ It is one thing to show in the creatures a clear demonstration of this Trinity of Persons, by showing an effect that fully answereth it ; and another thing to show such *vestigia*, adumbration, or image of it, as hath those dissimilitudes which must be allowed in any created image of God. This is it which I am to do.”* This excellent man has been charged, perhaps a little too hastily, with adopting one of the theories given above, as his own view of the Trinity, a Trinity of personified attributes rather than of real persons. It must, however, be acknowledged, that he has given some occasion for the allegation ; but his conclusion is worthy of himself, and instructive to all : “ But for my own part, as I unfeignedly account the doctrine of the Trinity the very sum and kernel of the Christian religion, (as expressed in our baptism,) and Athanasius his creed the best explication of it that ever I read ; so I think it very unmeet in these tremendous mysteries to go further than we have God’s own light to guide us.”†

The term “ person ” has been variously taken. It signifies, in ordinary language, an individual substance of a rational or intelligent nature.‡ In the strict philosophical sense, it has been said, two or more persons would be two or more distinct beings : If the term “ person ” were so applied to the Trinity in the Godhead, a plurality of Gods would follow ; whilst if

* Christian Religion.

† Ibid.

‡ It is defined by Occam, *Suppositum intellectuale*.

taken in what has been called a "political" sense, personality would be no more than relation, arising out of office. Personality in God is, therefore, not to be understood in either of the above senses, if respect be paid to the testimony of Scripture. God is one Being; this is admitted on both sides. But he is more than one Being in three relations; for personal acts, that is, such acts as we are used to ascribe to distinct persons, and which we take most unequivocally to characterize personality, are ascribed to each. The Scripture doctrine, therefore, is, that the Persons are not separate, but distinct; that they "are united Persons, or Persons having no separate existence, and that they are so united as to be but one Being, one God." In other words, that the one divine nature exists under the personal distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

"The word 'person,'" Howe remarks, "must not be taken to signify the same thing, when spoken of God and of ourselves;" that is, not in all respects. Nevertheless, it is the only word which can express the sense of those passages in which personal acts are unequivocally ascribed to each of the divine subsistences in the Godhead. Perhaps, however, one may be allowed to doubt whether, in all respects, the term "person" may not be taken to signify "the same thing" in us and in God. It is true, as before observed, that three persons among men or angels would convey the idea of three different and separate beings; but it may be questioned whether this arises from any thing necessarily conveyed in the idea of personality. We have been accustomed to observe personality only in connexion with separate beings; but this separation seems to be but a circumstance connected with personality, and not any thing which arises out of personality itself. Dr. Waterland clearly defines the term "person," as it must be understood in this controversy, to be "an intelligent agent, having the distinct characters, I, thou, he." That one being should necessarily conclude one person only, is, however, what none can prove from the nature of things; and all that can be affirmed on the subject is, that it is so in fact among all intelligent creatures with which we are acquainted. Among them, distinct persons are only seen in

separate beings; but this separation of being is clearly an accident of personality; for the circumstance of separation forms no part of the idea of personality itself, which is confined to a capability of performing personal acts. In God, the distinct Persons are represented as having a common foundation in one Being; but this union also forms no part of the idea of personality, nor can be proved inconsistent with it. The manner of the union, it is granted, is incomprehensible; and so is Deity himself, and every essential attribute with which his nature is invested.

It has been said, that the term “person” is not used in Scripture; and some who believe the doctrine it expresses, have objected to its use. To such it may be sufficient to reply, that, provided that which is clearly stated in Scripture be compendiously expressed by this term, and cannot so well be expressed except by an inconvenient periphrasis, it ought to be retained. They who believe such a distinction in the Godhead as amounts to a personal distinction, will not generally be disposed to surrender a word which keeps up the force of the scriptural idea; and they who do not, object not to the term, but to the doctrine which it conveys. It is not, however, so clear, that there is not Scripture warrant for the term itself. Our translators so concluded when, in Hebrews i. 3, they call the Son, “the express image” of the “person” of the Father. The original word is *hypostasis*; which was understood by the Greek Fathers to signify “a person,” though not, it is true, exclusively so used.* The sense of *ὑποστασις* in this passage must, however, be considered as fixed by the Apostle’s argument, by all who allow the Divinity of the Son of God. For the Son being called “the express image” of the Father, a distinction between the Son and the Father is thus unquestionably expressed; but if there be but one God, and the Son

* *Nonnunquam ὑποστασις pro eo quod nos ὁυσίαν dicimus, et vice versâ οὐσία pro eo quod nos ὑποστασιν appellamus, ab ipsis accepta fuit.*—BISHOP BULL. “ὑποστασις, it ought, however, to be observed, was used in the sense of “person,” before the Council of Nice, by many Christian writers; and in ancient Greek lexicons it is explained by *πρόσωπον*, and rendered by the Latins *persona*.

be divine, the distinction here expressed cannot be a distinction of essence, and must, therefore, be a personal one. Not from the Father's essence, but from the Father's hypostasis or person, can he be distinguished. This seems sufficient to have warranted the use of *hypostasis* in the sense of "person" in the early church, and to authorize the latter term in our own language. In fact, it was by the adoption of the two great theological terms, *ὁμοουσιος* and *ὕποστασις*, that the early church at length reared up impregnable barriers against the two leading heresies into which almost every modification of error, as to the person of Christ, may be resolved. The former, which is compounded of *ὁμος*, "the same," and *ουσια*, "substance," stood opposed to the Arians, who denied that Christ was of the substance of the Father, that is, that he was truly God; the latter, when fixed in the sense of "person," resisted the Sabellian scheme, which allowed the Divinity of the Son and Spirit, but denied their proper personality.

Among the leading writers in defence of the Trinity, there are some shades of difference in opinion, as to what constitutes the unity of the three Persons in the Godhead. Doddridge thus expresses these leading differences among the orthodox:—

"Mr. Howe seems to suppose, that there are three distinct eternal spirits, or distinct intelligent hypostases, each having his own distinct, singular, intelligent nature, united in such an inexplicable manner, as that, upon account of their perfect harmony, consent, and affection, to which he adds their mutual self-consciousness, they may be called 'the one God,' as properly as the different corporeal, sensitive, and intellectual natures united may be called 'one man.'

"Dr. Waterland, Dr. A. Taylor, with the rest of the Athanasians, assert three proper, distinct Persons, entirely equal to, and independent upon, each other; yet making up one and the same Being; and that, though there may appear many things inexplicable in the scheme, it is to be charged to the weakness of our understanding, and not to the absurdity of the doctrine itself.

"Bishop Pearson, with whom Bishop Bull also agrees, is

of opinion, that though God the Father is the Fountain of the Deity, the whole divine nature is communicated from the Father to the Son, and from both to the Spirit ; yet so as that the Father and the Son are not separate, nor separable from the Divinity, but do still exist in it, and are most intimately united to it. This was also Dr. Owen's scheme."*

The last view appears to comport most exactly with the testimony of Scripture, which shall be presently adduced.

Before we enter upon the examination of the scriptural proofs of the Trinity, it may be necessary to impress the reader with a sense of the importance of this revealed doctrine ; and the more so as it has been a part of the subtle warfare of the enemies of this fundamental branch of the common faith, to represent it as of little consequence, or as a matter of useless speculation. Thus, it is affirmed by Dr. Priestley, "All that can be said for it is, that the doctrine, however improbable in itself, is necessary to explain some particular texts of Scripture ; and that, if it had not been for those particular texts, we should have found no want of it ; for there is neither any fact in nature, nor any one purpose of morals, which are the object and end of all religion, that requires it."†

The non-importance of the doctrine has been a favourite subject with its opposers in all ages, that, by allaying all fears in the minds of the unwary, as to the consequences of the opposite errors, they might be put off their guard, and be the more easily persuaded to part with "the faith delivered to the saints." The answer is, however, obvious :—

1. The knowledge of God is fundamental to religion ; and as we know nothing of him but what he has been pleased to reveal, and as these revelations have all moral ends, and are designed to promote piety, and not to gratify curiosity, all that he has revealed of himself in particular must partake of that character of fundamental importance, which belongs to the knowledge of God in the aggregate. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus

* Lectures.

† History of early Opinions.

Christ whom thou hast sent." Nothing, therefore, can disprove the fundamental importance of the Trinity in Unity, but that which will disprove it to be a doctrine of Scripture.

2. Dr. Priestley allows, that this doctrine "is necessary to explain some particular texts of Scripture." This alone is sufficient to mark its importance; especially as it can be shown, that these "particular texts of Scripture" comprehend a very large portion of the sacred volume; that they are scattered throughout almost all the books of both Testaments; that they are not incidentally introduced only, but solemnly laid down as revelations of the nature of God; and that they manifestly give the tone both to the thinking and the phrase of the sacred writers on many other weighty subjects. That which is necessary to explain so many passages of holy writ; and without which they are so incorrigibly unmeaning that the Socinians have felt themselves obliged to submit to their evidence, or to expunge them from the inspired record; carries with it an importance of the highest character. So important, indeed, is it, upon the showing of these opposers of the truth themselves, that we can only preserve the Scriptures by admitting it; for they, first, by excepting to the genuineness of certain passages, then by questioning the inspiration of whole books, and, finally, of the greater part, if not the whole, of the New Testament, have nearly left themselves as destitute of a revelation from God as infidels themselves. No homage more expressive has ever been paid to this doctrine, as the doctrine of the Scriptures, than the liberties thus taken with the Bible by those who have denied it; no stronger proof can be offered of its importance, than that the Bible cannot be interpreted upon any substituted theory, they themselves being the judges.

3. It essentially affects our views of God as the object of our worship, whether we regard him as one in essence and one in Person, or admit that in the unity of this Godhead there are three equally divine Persons. These are two very different conceptions. Both cannot be true. The God of those who deny the Trinity is not the God of those who worship the Trinity in Unity, nor on the contrary; so that

one or the other worships what is “nothing in the world;” and, for any reality in the object of worship, might as well worship a pagan idol, which also, says St. Paul, “is nothing in the world.” “If God be Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the duties owing to God will be duties owing to that triune distinction, which must be paid accordingly; and whoever leaves any of them out of his idea of God, comes so far short of honouring God perfectly, and of serving him in proportion to the manifestations he has made of himself.”*

As the object of our worship is affected by our respective views on this great subject, so also is its character. We are betwixt the extremes of pure and acceptable devotion, and of gross and offensive idolatry, and must run to one or the other. If the doctrine of the Trinity be true, then those who deny it do not worship the God of the Scriptures, but a fiction of their own framing: If it be false, the Trinitarian, by paying divine honours to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, is equally guilty of idolatry, though in another mode.

Now it is surely important to determine this: And which is the most likely to have fallen into this false and corrupt worship, the very *primâ facie* evidence may determine:—The Trinitarian, who has the letter, and plain common-sense interpretation, of Scripture for his warrant; or he who confesses, that he must resort to all the artifices of criticism, and boldly challenge the inspiration of an authenticated volume, to get rid of the evidence which it exhibits against him, if taken in its first and most obvious meaning.† It is not now attempted to prove the Socinian heresy from the Scriptures; this has long been given up; and the main effort of all modern writers on that side has been directed to cavil at the adduced proofs of the opposite doctrine. They are, as to Scripture argument, wholly on the defensive; and thus allow,

* Waterland.

† St. Paul says, that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God;” but Dr. Priestley tells us, that this signifies nothing more, than that the books were written by good men, with the best views and designs.

at least, that they have no direct warrant for their opinions. We acknowledge, indeed, that the charge of idolatry would lie against us, could we be proved in error; but they seem to forget that it lies against them, should they be in error: And that they are in this error, they themselves tacitly acknowledge, if the Scriptures, which they now, in great measure, reject, must determine the question. On that authority, we may unhesitatingly account them idolaters, worshippers of what “is nothing in the world;” and not of the God revealed in the Bible.* Thus, the only hope which is left to the Socinian is held on the same tenure as the hope of the Deist,—the forlorn hope, that the Scriptures, which he rejects, are not true; for if those texts they reject, and those books which they hold of no authority, be established, then this whole charge, and its consequences, lie full against them.

4. Dr. Priestley objects, “that no fact in nature, nor any one purpose of morals, requires this doctrine.” The first part of the objection is futile and trifling, if he meant that the facts of nature do not require this doctrine for their philosophical illustration; for who seeks the explication of natural phenomena in theological doctrines? But there is one respect, in which even a right apprehension of the facts of nature depends upon proper views of the Godhead. All nature has a theological reason, and a theological end; and its interpretation, in reference to these, rests wholly upon the person and office of our Lord. All things were made by the Son, and for him; a theological view of the natural world, which is large or contracted, emphatic or spiritless, according to the conceptions which we form of the Son of God, “by whom, and for whom,” it was built and is preserved. The reason why the present circumstances of the natural world are, as before shown, neither

* To this purpose, Witsius, who shows that there can be neither religion nor worship, unless the Trinity be acknowledged: *Nulla etiam religio est, nisi quis verum Deum colat; non colit verum Deum, sed cerebri sui figmentum, qui non adorat in æquali divinitatis majestate Patrem, Filium, et Spiritum Sanctum. I nunc, et doctrinam eam ad praxin inutilem esse clama, sine quâ nulla Fidei aut Pietatis Christianæ praxis esse potest.*

wholly perfect, nor without large remains of original perfection ; neither accordant with the condition of condemned, nor of innocent, creatures ; but adapted only to such a state of man as the redeeming scheme supposes ; cannot, on the Socinian hypothesis, be discovered : For that redeeming scheme depends for its character upon our views of the person of Christ. Without a settled opinion on these points, we are, therefore, in this respect also, without the key to a just and full explanation of the theological character of our present residence, the world.

Another relation of the natural world to theology lies in its duration. It was made for Christ ; and the reason which determines that it shall be burned up centres in him. He is appointed Judge ; and shall terminate the present scene of things, by destroying the frame of the visible universe, when the probation of its inhabitants shall have expired. I beg the reader to turn to the remarks before made, on the reason of a general judgment being found in the fact, that man is under grace and not strict law ; and the argument offered to show, that if we were under a covenant of mere obedience, no cause for such an appointment, as that of a general judgment, would be obvious. If those views be correct, then the reason, both of a general judgment and the final destruction of the world, is to be found in the system of redemption, and consequently in such views of the person of Christ, as are not found in the Socinian scheme. The conclusion, therefore, is, that as “to facts in nature,” even they are intimately connected, in several very important respects, which no wise man can overlook, with the doctrine of the Trinity. Socinianism cannot explain the peculiar physical state of the world as connected with a state of trial ; and the general judgment, and the “end of all things,” bear no relation to its theology.

The connexion of the orthodox doctrine with morals is, of course, still more direct and striking ; and dim must have been that intellectual eye which could not discern, that, granting to the believers in the Trinity their own principles, its relation to morals is vital and essential. Whether those principles are supported by the Scripture, is another consideration. If they

could be disproved, then the doctrine ought to be rejected on a higher ground than that here urged ; but to attempt to push it aside, on the pretence of its having no connexion with morals, was but a very unworthy mode of veiling the case. For what are “morals,” but conformity to a divine law, which law must take its character from its Author? The Trinitarian scheme is essentially connected with the doctrine of atonement ; and what is called the Unitarian theory necessarily excludes atonement. From this arise opposite views of God, as the Governor of the world ; of the law under which we are placed ; of the nature and consequences of sin, the violation of that law ;—points which have an essential relation to morals, because they affect the nature of the sanctions which accompany the law of God. He who denies the doctrine of the Trinity, and its necessary adjunct the atonement, makes sin a matter of comparatively trifling moment : God is not strict to punish it ; and if punishment follow, it is not eternal. Whether, under these soft and easy views of the law of God, and of its transgression by sin, morals can have an equal sanction, or human conduct be equally restrained, are points too obvious to be argued ; but a subject which involves views of the judicial character of God so opposite, and of the evil and penalty of offence, must be considered as standing in the most intimate relation with every question of morals. It is presumed, too, in the objection, that faith, or, in other words, a firm belief in the testimony of God, is no part of morality. It is, however, sufficient to place this matter in a very different light, if we recollect that, to believe is so much a command that the highest sanction is connected with it. “He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.” Nothing, therefore, can be more important to us than to examine, without captiousness and the spirit of unbelief, what God hath revealed as the object of our faith ; since the rejection of any revealed truth, under the influence of pride, whether of the reason or the heart, or through affectation of independence, or love of the world, or any other corrupt motive, must be certainly visited with punishment ; the law of faith having the same authority, and the same sanction, as

the law of works. It is, therefore, a point of duty to believe, because it is a point of obedience ; and hence St. Paul speaks of “the obedience of faith.” For, as it has been well observed, “as to the nature of faith, it is a matter of obligation, as being that natural homage which the understanding or will pays to God in receiving and assenting to what he reveals upon his bare word or authority. It is a humiliation of ourselves, and a glorification of God.”* It may be added, too, that faith, which implies a submission to God, is an important branch also of discipline.

The objection, that “there can be no faith where there is not sufficient evidence to command it,” will not affect this conclusion : For when once the evidence of a divine revelation is admitted, our duty to receive its doctrines does not rest upon the rational evidence we may have of their truth ; but upon the much easier and plainer evidence, that they are among the things actually revealed. He, therefore, who admits a divine revelation, and rejects its doctrines because he has not a satisfactory rational evidence of them, is more obviously criminal in his unbelief than he who rejects the revelation itself ; for he openly debates the case with his Maker,—a circumstance which indicates, in the most striking manner, a corrupt habit of mind. It is, indeed, often pretended, that such truths are rejected, not so much on this account, as that they do not appear to be the sense of the revelation itself. But this cannot be urged by those who openly lay it down as a principle, that a true revelation can contain nothing which to them appears unreasonable ; or that, if it does, they are bound, by the law of their nature, not to admit it. Nor will it appear to be any other than an unworthy and dishonest pretence, in all cases where such kinds of criticism are resorted to, to alter the sense of a text, or to disprove its authority, as they would not allow in the case of texts supposed, by a partial construction, to favour their own opinion ; or such as would be condemned, by all learned and sober persons, as hypercritical and violent, if applied to any other writings. It may also be added, that

* Norris On Christian Prudence.

should any of the great qualities required in a serious and honest inquirer after truth have been uncultivated and unapplied, though a sincere conviction of the truth of an erroneous conclusion may exist, the guilt of unbelief would not be removed by such kind of sincerity. If there has been no anxiety to be right ; no prayer, earnest and devout, offered to God, to be kept from error ; if an humble sense of human liability to err has not been maintained ; if diligence in looking out for proofs, and patience and perseverance in inquiry, have not been exerted ; if honesty in balancing evidence, and a firm resolution to embrace the truth, whatever prejudices or interests it may contradict or oppose have not been felt ; even sincerity in believing that to be true, which, in the present state of a judgment determined, probably, before all the means of information have been resorted to, and, perhaps, under the perverting influences of a worldly or carnal state of mind, may appear to be so, will be no excuse. We are under a law of faith, and that law cannot be supposed to be so pliable and nugatory, as they who contend for the right of believing only what they please, would make it.

These observations will show the connexion of the doctrine of the Trinity with morals, the point denied by Dr. Priestley.

But, to leave this objection for views of a larger extent : Our love to God, which is the sum of every duty, its sanctifying motive, and consequently a compendium of all true religion, is most intimately and even essentially connected with the doctrine in question. God's love to us is the ground of our love to him ; and, by our views of that, it must be heightened or diminished. The love of God to man in the gift of his Son is that manifestation of it on which the Scriptures most emphatically and frequently dwell, and on which they establish our duty of loving God and one another. Now, the estimate which we are to take of the love of God, must be the value of his gifts to us. His greatest gift is the gift of his Son, through whom alone we have the promise of everlasting life ; but our estimate of the love which gives must be widely different, according as we regard the gift bestowed,—as a creature, or as a divine Person,—as merely a son of man, or as

the Son of God. If the former only, it is difficult to conceive in what this love, constantly represented as “unspeakable” and astonishing, could consist. Indeed, if we suppose Christ to be a man only, on the Socinian scheme, or as an exalted creature, according to the Arians, God might be rather said to have “so loved his Son” than us, as to send him into the world, on a service so honourable, and which was to be followed by so high and vast a reward, that he, a creature, should be advanced to universal dominion, and receive universal homage, as the price only of temporary sufferings, which, upon either the Socinian or Arian scheme, were not greater than those which many of his disciples endured after him, and, in many instances, not so great.*

For the same reason, the doctrine which denies our Lord’s divinity diminishes the love of Christ himself, takes away its generosity and devotedness, presents it under views infinitely below those contained in the New Testament, and weakens the motives which are drawn from it to excite our gratitude and obedience. “If Christ was in the form of God, equal with God, and very God, it was then an act of infinite love and condescension in him to become man; but if he was no more than a creature, it was no surprising condescension to embark in a work so glorious; such as being the Saviour of mankind, and such as would advance him to be Lord and Judge of the world, to be admired, revered, and adored, both by men and angels.”† To this it may be added, that the idea of disinterested, generous love, such as the love of Christ is represented to be by the Evangelists and the Apostles, cannot be

* *Equidem rem attentius perpendenti liquebit, ex hypothesi sive Socinianâ sive Arianâ, Deum in hoc negotio amorem et dilectionem suam potius in illum ipsum Filium, quam erga nos homines ostendisse. Quid enim? Is qui Christus dicitur, ex merâ Dei eudokia et beneplacito in eam gratiam electus est, ut post brevem hic in terris Deo præstitam obedientiam, ex puro puto homine juxta Socinistas, sive ex merâ et mutabili creaturâ, ut Ario-manitæ dicunt, Deus ipse fieret, ac divinos honores, non modò a nobis hominibus sed etiam ab ipsis angelis atque archangelis sibi tribuendos assequeretur, adeoque in alias creaturas omnes dominium atque imperium obtineret.*—BULL, *Jud. Eccl. Cathol.*

† Waterland’s Importance.

supported upon any supposition but that he was properly a divine Person. As a man, and as a creature only, however exalted, he would have profited by his exaltation ; but, considered as divine, Christ gained nothing. God is full and perfect ; he is exalted “above all blessing and praise ;” and therefore, our Lord, in that divine nature, prays that he might be glorified with the Father, with the glory he had “before :” Not a glory which was new to him ; not a glory heightened in its degree ; but the glory which he had with the Father “before the world was.” In a manner mysterious to us, even as to his divine nature, “he emptied himself, he humbled himself ;” but in that nature he returned to a glory which he had before the world was. The whole, therefore, was in him generous, disinterested love, ineffable and affecting condescension. The heresy of the Socinians and Arians totally annihilates, therefore, the true character of the love of Christ ; “so that,” as Dr. Sherlock well observes, “to deny the divinity of Christ alters the very foundations of Christianity, and destroys all the powerful arguments of the love, humility, and condescension of our Lord, which are the peculiar motives of the Gospel.”*

But it is not only in this view that the denial of the Divinity of our Lord would alter the foundation of the Christian scheme, but in others equally essential ; for,

1. The doctrine of satisfaction or atonement depends upon his Divinity ; and it is, therefore, consistently denied by those who reject the former. So important, however, is the decision of this case, that the very terms of our salvation, and the ground of our hope, are affected by it.

The Arians, now however nearly extinct, admitted the doctrine of atonement, though inconsistently. “No creature could merit from God, or do works of supererogation. If it be said, that God might accept it as he pleased, it may be said, upon the same principle, that he might accept the blood of bulls and of goats. Yet the Apostle tells us, that ‘it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away

sin ;' which words resolve the satisfaction, not merely into God's free acceptance, but into the intrinsic value of the sacrifice."* Hence the Scriptures so constantly connect the atonement with the character, the very divinity, of the Person suffering. It was "Jehovah" who was pierced ; (Zech. xii. 11 ;) "God," who purchased the church with his own blood. (Acts xx. 28.) It was ο Δεσποτης, "the high Lord," that bought us. (2 Peter ii. 1.) It was "the Lord of glory" that was crucified. (1 Cor. ii. 8.)

It is no small presumption of the impossibility of holding, with any support from the common sense of mankind, the doctrine of atonement with that of an inferior divinity, that these opinions have so uniformly slid down into a total denial of it ; that by almost all persons, except those who have retained the pure faith of the Gospel, Christ is regarded as a man only ; and that no atonement, in any sense, is allowed to have been made by his death. The terms, then, of human salvation are entirely different on one scheme and on the other ; and with respect to their advocates, one is "under the law," the other "under grace ;" one takes the cause of his own salvation into his own hands to manage it as he is able, and to plead with God, either that he is just, or that he may be justified by his own penitence and acts of obedient virtue ; the other pleads the meritorious death and intercession of his Saviour, in his name and mediation makes his requests known unto God, and asks a justification by faith, and a renewal of heart by the Holy Ghost. One stands with all his offences before his Maker, and in his own person, without a mediator and advocate ; the other avails himself of both. A question which involves such consequences, is surely not a speculative one ; but deeply practical and vital, and must be found to be so in its final issue.

2. The manner in which the evil of sin is estimated must be very different, on these views of the divine nature respectively ; and this is a consequence of a directly practical kind. Whatever lowers in men a sense of what an Apostle calls

“the exceeding sinfulness of sin,” weakens the hatred and horror of it among men, and by consequence encourages it. In the Socinian view, transgressions of the divine law are all regarded as venial, or, at most, to be subjected to slight and temporary punishment. In the orthodox doctrine, sin is an evil so great in itself, so hateful to God, so injurious in its effects, so necessary to be restrained by punishment, that it dooms the offender to eternal exclusion from God, and to positive endless punishment; and could only be forgiven through a sacrifice of atonement, so extraordinary as that of the death of the divine Son of God. By these means, forgiveness only could be promised; and the neglect of them, in order to pardon and sanctification too, aggravates the punishment, and makes the final visitation of justice the more terrible.

3. It totally changes the character of Christian experience. Those strong and painful emotions of sorrow and alarm, which characterize the descriptions and example of repentance in the Scriptures, are totally incongruous and uncalled for upon the theory which denies man's lost condition, and his salvation by a process of redemption. Faith, too, undergoes an essential change: It is no longer faith in Christ. His doctrine and his mission are its objects; but not, as the New Testament states it, his Person, as a Surety, a Sacrifice, a Mediator; and much less than any thing else can it be called, in the language of Scripture, “faith in his blood,” a phrase utterly incapable of an interpretation by Socinians. Nor is it possible to offer up prayer to God in the name of Christ, though expressly enjoined upon his disciples, in any sense which would not justify all the idolatry of the Roman Church, in availing themselves of the names, the interests, and the merits of saints. In a Socinian, this would even be more inconsistent, because he denies the doctrine of mediation in any sense which would intimate, that a benevolent God may not be immediately approached by his guilty but penitent creatures. Love to Christ, which is made so eminent a grace in internal and experimental Christianity, changes also its character: It cannot be supreme; for that would be to break the first and

great command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," if Christ himself be not that Lord our God. It must be love of the same kind we feel to creatures from whom we have received any benefit; and a passion, therefore, to be guarded and restrained, lest it should become excessive, and wean our hearts and thoughts from God. But surely it is not under such views that love to Christ is represented in the Scriptures; and against its excess, as against creaturely attachments, we have certainly no admonition, no cautions. The love of Christ to us also as a motive to generous service, sufferings, and death, for the sake of others, loses all its force and application. "The love of Christ constraineth us; for we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." That love of Christ which constrained the Apostle, was a love which led him to die for men. St. John makes the duty of dying for our brother obligatory upon all Christians, if called to it, and grounds it upon the same fact: "He laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brethren." The meaning, doubtless, is, in order to save them; and though men are saved by Christ's dying for them, in a very different sense from that in which they can be saved by our dying in the cause of instructing, and thus instrumentally saving, each other; yet the argument is founded upon the necessary connexion which there is between the death of Christ and the salvation of men. But, on the Socinian scheme, Christ did, in no sense, die for men; no, not in their general mode of interpreting such passages, "for the benefit of men:" For what benefit, independent of propitiation, which Socinians deny, do men derive from the voluntary death of Christ, considered as a mere human instructor? If it be said, "His death was an example," it was not specially and peculiarly so; for both Prophets and Apostles have died with resignation and fortitude. If it be alleged, that "it was to confirm his doctrine," the answer is, that, in this view, it was nugatory, because it had been confirmed by undoubted miracles: If, "that he might confirm his mission by his resurrection," this might as well have followed from a natural as from a violent death; and, besides, the benefit which men derive from him

is, by this notion, placed in his resurrection, and not in his death, which is always exhibited in the New Testament with marked and striking emphasis. The motives to generous sacrifices of ease and life, in behalf of men, drawn from the death of Christ, have, therefore, no existence whenever his Godhead and sacrifice are denied.

4. The general and habitual exercises of the affections of trust, hope, joy, &c., towards Christ, are all interfered with by the Socinian doctrine. This has, in part, been stated; but “if the Redeemer were not omnipresent and omniscient, could we be certain that he always hears our prayers, and knows the source and remedy of all our miseries? If he were not all-merciful, could we be certain he must always be willing to pardon and relieve us? If he were not all-powerful, could we be sure that he must always be able to support and strengthen, to enlighten and direct us? Of any being less than God, we might suspect that his purposes might waver, his promises fail, his existence itself, perhaps, terminate; for of every created being, the existence must be dependent and terminable.”*

The language too, I say not of the church of Christ in all ages, for that has been formed upon her faith, but of the Scriptures themselves, must be altered and brought down to these inferior views. No dying saint can say, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,” if he be a man like ourselves; and the redeemed neither in heaven nor in earth can dare so to associate a creature with God in divine honours and solemn worship, as to unite in the chorus, “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever!”

The same essential changes must be made in the doctrine of divine agency in the heart of man, and in the church; and the same confusion introduced into the language of Scripture. “Our salvation by Christ does not consist only in the expiation of our sins, &c., but in communication of divine grace and power, to renew and sanctify us: And this is everywhere in Scripture attributed to the Holy Spirit, as his peculiar office

* Dr. Graves's Scriptural Proofs of the Trinity.

in the economy of man's salvation : It must, therefore, make a fundamental change in the doctrine of divine grace and assistance, to deny the divinity of the Holy Spirit. For can a creature be the universal spring and fountain of divine grace and life ? Can a finite creature be a kind of universal soul to the whole Christian church, and to every sincere member of it ? Can a creature make such close application to our minds, know our thoughts, set bounds to our passions, inspire us with new affections and desires, and be more intimate to us than we are to ourselves ? If a creature be the only instrument and principle of grace, we shall soon be tempted either to deny the grace of God, or to make it only an external thing, and entertain very mean conceits of it. All those miraculous gifts which were bestowed upon the Apostles and primitive Christians for the edification of the church, all the graces of the Christian life, are the fruits of the Spirit. The divine Spirit is the principle of immortality in us, which first gave life to our souls, and will, at the last day, raise our dead bodies out of the dust ;—works which sufficiently proclaim him to be God, and which we cannot heartily believe, in the Gospel notion, if he be not.”* All this has been felt so forcibly by the deniers of the divinity of the Holy Spirit, that they have escaped only by taking another leap down the gulf of error ; and, at present, the Socinians deny that there is any Holy Ghost, and resolve the whole into a figure of speech.

But the importance of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity may be finally argued, from the manner in which the denial of it would affect the credit of the holy Scriptures themselves ; for if this doctrine be not contained in them, their tendency to mislead is obvious. Their constant language is so adapted to deceive, and even to compel the belief of falsehood, in fundamental points, and to lead to the practice of idolatry itself, that they would lose all claim to be regarded as a revelation from the God of truth, and ought rather to be shunned than to be studied. A great part of the Scriptures

* Sherlock's Vindication.

is directed against idolatry, which is declared to be "that abominable thing which the Lord hateth;" and in pursuance of this design; the doctrine that there is but one God is laid down in the most explicit terms, and constantly confirmed by appeals to his works. The very first command in the Decalogue is, "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me;" and the sum of the law, as to our duty to God, is, that we love him "with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength." If the doctrine of a Trinity of divine persons in the Unity of the Godhead be consistent with all this, then the style and manner of the Scriptures are in perfect accordance with the moral ends they propose, and the truths in which they would instruct mankind; but if the Son and the Holy Spirit are creatures, then is the language of the sacred books most deceptive and dangerous. For how is it to be accounted for, in that case, that, in the Old Testament, God should be spoken of in plural terms, and that this plurality should be restricted to three? How is it that the very name "Jehovah" should be given to each of them, and that repeatedly and on the most solemn occasions? How is it that the promised incarnate Messiah should be invested, in the prophecies of his advent, with the loftiest attributes of God; and that works infinitely super-human, and divine honours, should be predicted of him? and that acts and characters of unequivocal divinity, according to the common apprehension of mankind, should be ascribed to the Spirit also? How is it, that, in the New Testament, the name of God should be given to both, and that without any intimation that it is to be taken in an inferior sense? How is it that the creation and conservation of all things should be ascribed to Christ; that he should be worshipped by angels and by men; that he should be represented as seated on the throne of the universe, to receive the adorations of all creatures; and that in the very form of initiation by baptism into his church, itself a public and solemn profession of faith, the baptism is enjoined to be performed in the one name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? One God and two creatures! As though the very door of entrance into the Christian church should have been purposely made the gate

of the worst and most corrupting error ever introduced among mankind,—trust and worship in creatures, as God,—the error which has spread darkness and moral desolation over the whole pagan world !

And here it cannot be said, that the question is begged, that more is taken for granted than the Socinians will allow ; for this argument does not rest at all upon what the deniers of our Lord's divinity understand by all these terms, and what interpretations may be put upon them. This is the popular view of the subject which has just been drawn from the Scriptures ; and they themselves acknowledge it by resorting to the arts and labours of far-fetched criticism, in order to attach to these passages of Scripture a sense different from the obvious and popular one. But it is not merely the popular sense of Scripture. It is so taken, and has been taken in all ages, by the wisest men and most competent critics, to be the only consistent sense of the sacred volume ; a circumstance which still more strongly proves, that if the Scriptures were written on Socinian principles, they are more unfortunately expressed than any book in the world ; and they can, on no account, be considered a divine revelation, not because of their obscurity, (for they are not obscure,) but because terms are used in them which convey a sense different from what the writers intended, if indeed they were Socinians. But their evidences prove them to be a revelation of truth from the God of truth ; and they cannot, therefore, be so written as to lead men who use only ordinary care into fundamental error. And the conclusion, therefore, must inevitably be, that if we must admit either, on the one hand, what is so derogatory to the Scriptures, and so subversive of all confidence in them ; or, on the other, that the doctrine of the divinity of the Son and Holy Spirit is there explicitly taught, there is no medium between absolute infidelity and the acknowledgment of our Lord's divinity ; and, indeed, to adopt the representation of a great Divine, “ it is rather to rave than to reason, to suppose that He whom the Scriptures teach us to regard as the Saviour of our souls, and as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption ; He who hears our prayers, and is always present with his church throughout the

world, who sits at the right hand of God, in the glory of his Father, and who shall come at the last day, in glory and majesty, accompanied with ministering angels, to judge all mankind, and to bring to light the very secrets of their hearts, —should be a mere man, or a created being of any kind.”*

I close this view of the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity with the observations of Dr. Waterland :—

“ While we consider the doctrine of the Trinity as interwoven with the very frame and texture of the Christian religion, it appears to me natural to conceive that the whole scheme and economy of man’s redemption was laid with a principal view to it, in order to bring mankind gradually into an acquaintance with the three divine Persons, one God blessed for ever. I would speak with all due modesty, caution, and reverence, as becomes us always in what concerns the unsearchable councils of heaven ; but I say, there appears to me none so natural or so probable an account of the divine dispensations, from first to last, as what I have just mentioned, namely, that such a redemption was provided, such an expiation for sins required, such a method of sanctification appointed, and then revealed, that so men might know that there are three divine Persons, might be apprized how infinitely the world is indebted to them, and might accordingly be both instructed and inclined to love, honour, and adore them here, because that must be a considerable part of their employment and happiness hereafter.”†

In order to bring this great controversy in such an order before the reader, as may assist him to enter with advantage into it, I

* Οικονωμία, quæ ipsi tribuitur, θεολογίαν necessariò supponit, ipsumque omninò statuit. Quid enim ? Messiam sive Christum prædicant sacræ nostræ literæ et credere nos proflitemur omnes, qui sit animarum sospitalor, qui nobis sit sapientia, justitia, sanctificatio, et redemptio,—qui preces suorum, ubivis sacro-sanctum ejus nomen invocantium, illicò exaudiat,—qui ecclesiæ suæ per universum terrarum orbem disseminatæ, semper præstò sit,—qui Deo Patri, συνθρονος, et in eâdem sede collocatus sit,—qui denique, in exitu mundi, immensâ gloriâ et majestate refulgens, angelis ministris stipatus, veniet orbem judicaturus, non modò facta omnia, sed et cordis secreta omnium quotquot fuerint hominum in lucem proditurus, &c. Hæccine omnia in purum hominem, aut creaturam aliquam competere ? Fidenter dico, qui ita sentiat, non modò contra fidem, sed et rationem ipsam insanire.—BULL, Judic. Eccl. Cath.

† Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity.

shall first carefully collect the leading testimonies of Scripture on the doctrine of the Trinity and the divinity of the Son and Holy Spirit,—adduce the opinions of the Jewish and Christian churches,—answer objections,—explain the chief modern heresies on this subject, and give their scriptural confutation. An observation or two on the difficulties in which the doctrine of a Trinity of Persons in the unity of one undivided Godhead is said to involve us, may properly close this chapter.

Mere difficulty in conceiving of what is wholly proper and peculiar to God, forms no objection to a doctrine. It is more rationally to be considered as a presumption of its truth, since in the nature of God there must be mysteries far above the reach of the human mind. All his natural attributes, though of some of them we have images in ourselves, are utterly incomprehensible ; and the manner of his existence cannot be less so. All attempts, however, to show that this great doctrine implies a contradiction, have failed. A contradiction is only where two contraries are predicated of the same thing, and in the same respect. Let this be kept in view, and the sophisms resorted to on this point by the adversaries of the faith will be easily detected. They urge, that the same thing cannot be three and one, that is, (if the proposition has any meaning at all,) not in the same respect ; the three persons are not one person, and the one God is not three Gods. But it is no contradiction to say, that in different respects the three may be one ; that is, that, in respect of persons, they shall be three, and in respect of Godhead, essence, or nature, they shall be one. The manner of the thing is a perfectly distinct question ; and its incomprehensibility proves nothing, but that we are finite creatures, and not God. As for difficulties, we shall certainly not be relieved by running either to the Arian or the Socinian hypothesis. The one ascribes the first formation and the perpetual government of the universe, not to the Deity, but to the wisdom and power of a creature ; for, however exalted the Arian inferior deity may be, he is a creature still. The other makes a mere man the creator of all things. For, whatever is meant by “the Word” in St. John’s Gospel, it is the same Word of which the Evangelist says, that all things were made by it, and

that itself was made flesh. If this Word be the divine attribute wisdom, then that attribute, in the degree which was equal to the formation of the universe, in this view of the Scripture doctrine, was conveyed entire into the mind of a mere man, the son of a Jewish carpenter ! A much greater difficulty, in my apprehension, than any that is to be found in the catholic faith."*

* Horsley's Letters.

CHAPTER IX.

Trinity :—Scripture Testimony.

IN adducing the doctrine of a Trinity of divine Persons in the unity of the Godhead from the sacred volume, by exhibiting some of its numerous and decisive testimonies as to this being the mode in which the divine nature subsists ; the explicit manner in which it is there laid down, that there is but one God, must again be noticed.

This is the foundation and the key-stone of the whole fabric of scriptural theology ; and every argument in favour of the Trinity flows from this principle of the absolute unity of God, —a principle that the heresies at which we have glanced fancy to be inconsistent with the orthodox doctrine.

The solemn and unequivocal manner in which the unity of God is stated as a doctrine, and is placed as the foundation of all true religion, whether devotional or practical, need not again be repeated ; and it is here sufficient to refer to the chapter on the unity of God.

Of this one God, the high and peculiar, and, as it has been truly called, the appropriate, name is “Jehovah ;” which, like all the Hebrew names of God, is not an insignificant and accidental term, but a name of revelation, a name adopted by God himself for the purpose of making known the mystery of his nature. To what has been already said on this appellation, I may add, that the most eminent critics derive it from *הוה*, *huit, existit* ; which in *Kal* signifies “to be,” and in *Hipheel* “to cause to be.” Buxtorf, in his definition, includes both these ideas, and makes it signify a Being existing from himself from everlasting to everlasting, and communicating existence to others ; and adds that it signifies “the Being who is, and was, and is to come.” Its derivation has been variously stated by critics, and some fanciful notions have been formed

of the import of its several letters; but in this idea of absolute existence all agree. "It is acknowledged by all," says Bishop Pearson, "that יהוה is from הוה or היה; and God's own interpretation proves no less. (Exod. iii. 14.) Some contend, that futurity is essential to the name; yet all agree the root signifieth nothing but 'essence,' or 'existence,' that is, *το ειναι* or *υπαρχειν*."* No appellation of the divine Being could therefore be more distinctive than that which imports independent and eternal being; and for this reason probably it was, that the Jews, up to a very high antiquity, had a singular reverence for it; carried, it is true, to a superstitious scrupulosity; but thereby showing that it was the name which unveiled, to the thoughts of those to whom it was first given, the awful and overwhelming glories of a self-existent Being,—the very unfathomable depths of his eternal Godhead.†

In examining what the Scriptures teach of this self-existent and eternal Being, our attention is first arrested by the important fact, that this one Jehovah is spoken of under plural appellations; and that, not once or twice, but in a countless number of instances. So that the Hebrew names of God, acknowledged by all to be expressive and declaratory of some peculiarity or excellence of his nature, are found in several cases in the plural as well as in the singular form, and one of them, *Aleim*, generally so; and, notwithstanding it was so fundamental and distinguishing an article of the Jewish faith, in opposition to the Polytheism of almost all other nations, that there was but one living and true God. I give a few instances. "Jehovah," if it has not a plural form, has more than one personal application. "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven." We have here the visible Jehovah, who had talked with Abraham, raining the storm of vengeance from another Jehovah, out of heaven, and who was therefore invisible. Thus

* Exposition of the Creed.

† Maimonides tells us, that it was not lawful to utter this name, except in the sanctuary, and by the Priests: *Nomen quod, ut nosti, non proferre licet, nisi in sanctuario, et a sacerdotibus Dei sanctis, solum in benedictione sacerdotum, ut et a sacerdote magno in die jejunii.*

we have two Jehovahs expressly mentioned, "The Lord rained from the Lord;" and yet we have it most solemnly asserted, in Deuteronomy vi. 4, "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah."

The very first name in the Scriptures under which the divine Being is introduced to us as the Creator of heaven and earth, is a plural one, אֱלֹהִים, *Aleim*; and to connect, in the same singular manner as in the foregoing instance, plurality with unity, it is the nominative case to a verb singular. "In the beginning, Gods created the heavens and the earth." Of this form innumerable instances occur in the Old Testament. That the word is plural, is made certain by its being often joined with adjectives, pronouns, and verbs plural; and yet, when it can mean nothing else but the true God, it is generally joined in its plural form with verbs singular. To render this still more striking, the *Aleim* are said to be *Jehovah*; and *Jehovah*, the *Aleim*: Thus, in Psalm c. 3: "Know ye, that *Jehovah*, He, the *Aleim*, he hath made us, and not we ourselves." And in the passage before given, "Jehovah our *Aleim* ('Gods') is one Jehovah." אֵל, *Al*, "The mighty One," another name of God, has its plural אֱלִים, *Alim*, "The mighty Ones:" The former is rendered by Trommius Θεός; the latter, Θεοι. אביר, *Abir*, "The potent One," has the plural אבירים, *Abirim*, "The potent Ones." Man did eat the bread of the *Abirim*, "angels' food," conveys no idea; the manna was the bread provided miraculously, and was therefore called "the food of the powerful ones," of them who have power over all nature, the one God.

אֲדֹנִים, *Adonim*, is the plural form of אֲדֹנָי, *Adon*, "a Governor." "If I be *Adonim*, 'masters,' where is my fear?" (Mal. i. 6.) Many other instances might be given; as, "Remember thy Creators in the days of thy youth." "The knowledge of the holy Ones is understanding." "There be higher than they;" (Heb. "High Ones;") and in Daniel, "The Watchers and the Holy Ones."

Other plural forms of speech also occur when the one true God only is spoken of: "And God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness." "And the Lord God said,

Behold, the man is become like one of us." "And the Lord said, Let us go down." "Because there God appeared to him;" Hebrew, "God they appeared," the verb being plural. These instances need not be multiplied: They are the common forms of speech in the sacred Scriptures, which no criticism has been able to resolve into mere idioms, and which only the doctrine of a plurality of persons in the unity of the Godhead can satisfactorily explain. If they were mere idioms, they could not have been misunderstood, by those to whom the Hebrew tongue was native, to imply plurality; but of this we have sufficient evidence, which shall be adduced when we speak of the faith of the Jewish church. They have been acknowledged to form a striking singularity in the Hebrew language, even by those who have objected to the conclusion drawn from them; and the question, therefore, has been to find an hypothesis which should account for a peculiarity, that is found in no other language with the same circumstances.*

Some have supposed angels to be associated with God when these plural forms occur. For this there is no foundation in the texts themselves; and it is, besides, a manifest absurdity. Others, that the style of royalty was adopted; which is refuted by two considerations,—that Almighty God in other instances speaks in the singular and not in the plural number,—and that this was not the style of the Sovereigns of the earth, when Moses or any of the sacred penmen composed their writings, no instance of it being found in any of the inspired books. A third opinion is, that the plural form of speaking of God was adopted by the Hebrews from their ancestors, who were Polytheists, and that the ancient theological term was retained after the unity of God was acknowledged. This assumes what

* The argument for the Trinity drawn from the plural appellations given to God in the Hebrew Scriptures, was opposed by the younger Buxtorf; who yet admits that this argument should not altogether be rejected among Christians: "For upon the same principle on which not a few of the Jews refer this emphatical application of the plural number to a plurality of powers, or of influences, or of operations, that is, *ad extra*; why may we not refer it, *ad intra*, to a plurality of persons and to personal works? Yea, who certainly knows what that was which the ancient Jews understood by this plurality of powers and faculties?"

is totally without proof, that the ancestors of the Hebrews were Polytheists ; and could that be made out, it would leave it still to be accounted for why other names of the Deity equally ancient, for any thing that appears to the contrary, are not also plural, and especially the high name of Jehovah ; and why, more particularly, the very appellation in question, *Aleim*, should have a singular form also, אֱלֹהִים, in the same language. The grammatical reasons which have been offered are equally unsatisfactory. If, then, no hypothesis explains this peculiarity, but that which concludes it to indicate that mode of the divine existence which was expressed in later theology by the phrase, “a trinity of Persons,” the inference is too powerful to be easily resisted, that these plural forms must be considered as intended to intimate the plurality of Persons in essential connexion with one supreme and adorable Deity.

This argument, however, taken alone, powerful as it has often been justly deemed, does not contain the strength of the case. For natural as it is to expect, presuming this to be the mode of the divine existence, that some of his names which, according to the expressive and simple character of the Hebrew language, are descriptions of realities, and that some of the modes of expression, adopted even in the earliest revelations, should carry some intimation of a fact, which, as essentially connected with redemption, the future complete revelation of the redeeming scheme was intended fully to unfold ; yet, were these plural titles and forms of construction blotted out, the evidence of a plurality of divine Persons in the Godhead would still remain in its strongest form. For that evidence is not merely, that God has revealed himself under plural appellations, nor that these are constructed with sometimes singular and sometimes plural forms of speech ; but that three Persons, and three Persons only, are spoken of in the Scriptures under divine titles, each having the peculiar attributes of Divinity ascribed to him ; and yet that the first and leading principle of the same book, which speaks thus of the character and works of these Persons, should be, that “there is but one God.” This point being once established, it may be asked,

Which of the hypotheses, the orthodox, the Arian, or the Socinian, agrees best with this plain and explicit doctrine of holy writ? Plain and explicit, I say, not as to the mode of the divine existence, not as to the comprehension of it, but as to this particular,—that the doctrine itself is plainly stated in the Scriptures.

Let this point, then, be examined, and it will be seen even that the very number three has this pre-eminence; that the application of these names and powers is restrained to it, and never strays beyond it; and that those who confide in the testimony of God, rather than in the opinions of men, have sufficient scriptural reason to distinguish their faith from the unbelief of others by avowing themselves Trinitarians.*

The solemn form of benediction, in which the Jewish High Priests were commanded to bless the children of Israel, has in it this peculiar indication, and singularly answers to the form of benediction so general in the close of the apostolic Epistles, and which so appropriately closes the solemn services of Christian worship. It is given in Numbers vi. 24—27:—

“Jehovah bless thee and keep thee:

Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

Jehovah lift his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.”

If the three members of this form of benediction be attentively considered, they will be found to agree respectively with the three Persons taken in the usual order of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Father is the Author of blessing and preservation; illumination and grace are from the Son; illumination and peace from the Spirit, the Teacher of truth, and the Comforter.†

“The first member of the formula expresses the benevolent ‘love of God,’ the Father of mercies and Fountain of all good; the second well comports with the redeeming and reconciling ‘grace of our Lord Jesus Christ;’ and the last is

* The word *τριάς*, *trinitas*, came into use in the second century.

† See Jones’s Catholic Doctrine.

appropriate to the purity, consolation, and joy, which are received from the ‘communion of the Holy Spirit.’”*

The connexion of certain specific blessings in this form of benediction with the Jehovah mentioned three times distinctly, and those which are represented as flowing from the Father, Son, and Spirit, in the apostolic form, would be a singular coincidence if it even stood alone; but the light of the same eminent truth, though not yet fully revealed, breaks forth from other partings of the clouds of the early morning of revelation.

The inner part of the Jewish sanctuary was called “the holy of holies,” that is, the holy place of the Holy Ones; and the number of these is indicated and limited to three, in the celebrated vision of Isaiah, and that with great explicitness. The scene of that vision is the holy place of the temple, and lies, therefore, in the very abode and residence of the Holy Ones, here celebrated by the seraphs who veiled their faces before them. And one cried unto another, and said, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts.” This passage, if it stood alone, might be eluded by saying, that this act of divine adoration is merely emphatic, or in the Hebrew mode of expressing a superlative; though that is assumed, and by no means proved. It is, however, worthy of serious notice, that this distinct trine act of adoration, which has been so often supposed to mark a plurality of Persons as the objects of it, is answered by a voice from that excellent glory which overwhelmed the mind of the Prophet when he was favoured with the vision, responding in the same language of plurality in which the doxology of the seraphs is expressed: “Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” But this is not the only evidence, that in this passage the Holy Ones, who were addressed each by his appropriate and equal designation of “holy,” were the three divine subsistences in the Godhead. The Being addressed is the “Lord of Hosts.” This all acknowledge to include the Father; but the Evangelist John, in manifest reference to this

* Smith’s Person of Christ.

transaction, observes, "These things said Esaias, when he saw his," Christ's, "glory and spake of him." (John xii. 41.) In this vision, therefore, we have the Son also, whose glory on this occasion the Prophet is said to have beheld. Acts xxviii. 25, determines that there was also the presence of the Holy Ghost: "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the Prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive," &c. These words, quoted from Isaiah, the Apostle Paul declares to have been spoken by the Holy Ghost, and Isaiah declares them to have been spoken on this very occasion by the "Lord of Hosts." "And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not," &c.

Now let all these circumstances be placed together,—the place, the holy place of the Holy Ones,—the repetition of the homage, three times, "Holy, holy, holy,"—the one Jehovah of Hosts, to whom it was addressed,—the plural pronoun used by this one Jehovah, *us*,—the declaration of an Evangelist, that on this occasion Isaiah saw the glory of Christ,—the declaration of St. Paul, that the Lord of Hosts who spoke on that occasion was the Holy Ghost; and the conclusion will not appear to be without most powerful authority, both circumstantial and declaratory, that the adoration, "Holy, holy, holy," referred to the divine three, in the one essence of the Lord of Hosts. Accordingly, in the book of Revelation, where "the Lamb" is so constantly represented as sitting upon the divine throne, and where he by name is associated with the Father as the object of the equal homage and praise of saints and angels; this scene from Isaiah is transferred into the fourth chapter; and the "living creatures," the seraphim of the Prophet, are heard in the same strain, and with the same trine repetition, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." Isaiah also makes this threefold distinction and limitation: "And now the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me." (Isaiah xlviii. 16.) The words are manifestly spoken by Messiah, who declares himself sent by the Lord God, and by his Spirit. Some

reader it, "Hath sent me and his Spirit," the latter term being also in the accusative case. This strengthens the application, by bringing the phrase nearer to that so often used by our Lord in his discourses, who speaks of himself and the Spirit being sent by the Father: "The Father which sent me;" "The Comforter whom I will send unto you from the Father, who proceedeth from the Father." "Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read; for my mouth it hath commanded, and his Spirit it hath gathered them." (Isaiah xxxiv. 16.) "Here is one Person speaking of the Spirit, another Person."* "I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts: According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you: Fear ye not. For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come." (Haggai ii. 4, 5, 7.) Here also we have three Persons distinctly mentioned; the Lord of Hosts, his Spirit, and the Desire of all nations.

Many other passages might be given, in which there is this change of Persons, sometimes enumerating two, sometimes three, but never more than three, arrayed in these eminent and divine characters. The passages in the New Testament are familiar to every one: "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost:" With others, in which the sacred three, and three only, are thus collocated as objects of equal trust and honour, and equally the fountain and the source of grace and benediction.

On the celebrated passage in 1 John v. 7, "There are three that bear record in heaven," I say nothing; because authorities against its genuineness are found in the ranks of the orthodox, and among those who do not captiously make objections; and because it would scarcely be fair to adduce it as a proof, unless the arguments on each side were exhibited, which would lead to discussions that lie beside the design of

this work, and more properly have their place in separate and distinct treatises. The recent revival of the inquiry into the genuineness of this text, however, shows that the point is far from being critically settled against the passage, as a true portion of holy writ; and the argument from the context is altogether in favour of those who advocate it, the *hiatus* in the sense never having been satisfactorily supplied by those who reject it. This is of more weight in arguments of this kind than is often allowed. As to the doctrine of the text, it has elsewhere abundant proof.

It has now been shown, that whilst the unity of God is to be considered a fundamental doctrine of the Scriptures, laid down with the utmost solemnity, and guarded with the utmost care, by precepts, by threatenings, by promises, by tremendous punishments of polytheism and idolatry among the Jews, the very names of God, as given in the revelation made of himself, have plural forms, and are connected with plural modes of speech; that other indications of plurality are given in various parts of holy writ; and that this plurality is restricted to three. On those texts, however, which in their terms denote a plurality and a trinity, the proof does not wholly or chiefly rest; and they have been only adduced as introductory to instances too numerous to be all examined, in which two distinct Persons are spoken of, sometimes connectedly and sometimes separately, as associated with God in his perfections and incommunicable glories, and as performing works of unequivocal divine majesty and infinite power, and thus together manifesting that tri-unity of the Godhead which the true church has in all ages adored and magnified. This is the great proof upon which the doctrine rests. The first of these two Persons is the Son, the second the Spirit. Of the former, it will be observed that the titles of Jehovah, "Lord," "God," "King," "King of Israel," "Redeemer," "Saviour," and other names of God, are ascribed to him; that he is invested with the attributes of eternity, omnipotence, ubiquity, infinite wisdom, holiness, goodness, &c.; that he was the Leader, the visible King, and the object of the worship, of the Jews; that he forms the great subject of prophecy, and is spoken of in

the predictions of the Prophets in language, which, if applied to men or to angels, would, by the Jews, have been considered not as sacred but idolatrous, and which, therefore, except that it agreed with their ancient faith, would totally have destroyed the credit of those writings ; that he is eminently known both in the Old Testament, and in the New, as “ the Son of God,” an appellative which is sufficiently proved to have been considered as implying an assumption of divinity, by the circumstance that, for asserting it, our Lord was condemned to die as a blasphemer by the Jewish Sanhedrim ; that he became incarnate in our nature ; wrought miracles by his own original power, and not, as his servants, in the name of another ; that he authoritatively forgave sin ; that, for the sake of his sacrifice, sin is forgiven to the end of the world, and for the sake of that alone ; that he rose from the dead to seal all these pretensions to divinity ; that he is seated upon the throne of the universe, all power being given to him in heaven and in earth ; that his inspired Apostles exhibit him as the Creator of all things visible and invisible ; as the true God and the eternal life ; as the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God and our Saviour ; that they offer to him the highest worship ; that they trust in him, and command all others to trust in him, for eternal life ; that he is the Head over all things ; that angels worship him and render him service ; that he will raise the dead at the last day, judge the secrets of men’s hearts, and finally determine the everlasting state of the righteous and the wicked.

This is the outline of scriptural testimony as to the Son. As to the divine character of the Spirit, it is equally explicit. He too is called “ Jehovah,” “ Jehovah of Hosts,” “ God.” Eternity, omnipotence, ubiquity, infinite wisdom, and other attributes of Deity, are ascribed to him. He is introduced as an agent in the work of the creation, and to Him is ascribed the conservation of all living beings. He is the source of the inspiration of Prophets and Apostles ; the object of worship ; the efficient agent in illuminating, comforting, and sanctifying the souls of men. He makes intercession for the saints ; quickens the dead ; and, finally, he is associated with the

Father and the Son, in the form of baptism into the one name of God, and in the apostolic form of benediction, as, equally with them, the source and fountain of grace and blessedness. These decisive points I shall proceed to establish by the express declarations of various passages, both of the Old and New Testament. When that is done, the argument will then be, that—as on the one hand the doctrine of Scripture is, that there is but one God ; and, on the other, that throughout both Testaments three Persons are, in unequivocal language, and by unequivocal circumstances, declared to be divine ; the only conclusion which can harmonize these otherwise opposite, contradictory, and most misleading propositions and declarations, is, that the three Persons are one God.

In the prevalent faith of the Christian church, neither of these views is for a moment lost sight of. Thus it exactly harmonizes with the Scriptures ; nor can it be charged with greater mystery, than is assignable to them. The Trinity is asserted, but the unity is not obscured ; the unity is confessed, but without denial of the Trinity. No figures of speech, no unnatural modes of interpretation, are resorted to, to reconcile these views with human conceptions, which they must infinitely transcend. This is the character of the heresies which have arisen on this subject. They all spring from the attempt to make this mystery of God conceivable by the human mind, and less a stone of stumbling to the pride of reason. On the contrary, “the faith of God’s elect,” as embodied in the creeds and confessions of all truly evangelical churches, follows the example of the Scriptures in entirely overlooking these low considerations, and “declaring the thing as it is,” with all its mystery and incomprehensibleness, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness. It declares “that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity ; neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance ; for there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost ; but the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one ; the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God ; and yet there are not

three Gods, but one God.”* Or, as it is well expressed by an eminent modern, as great a master of reason and science as he was of theology: “There is one divine nature or essence, common unto three Persons, incomprehensibly united, and ineffably distinguished; united in essential attributes, distinguished by peculiar idioms and relations; all equally infinite in every divine perfection, each different from the other in order and manner of subsistence; that there is a mutual existence of one in all, and all in one; a communication without any deprivation or diminution in the communicant; an eternal generation, and an eternal procession without precedence or succession, without proper causality or dependence; a Father imparting his own, and a Son receiving his Father’s life, and a Spirit issuing from both, without any division or multiplication of essence. These are notions which may well puzzle our reason in conceiving how they agree, but ought not to stagger our faith in asserting that they are true; for if the holy Scripture teacheth us plainly, and frequently doth inculcate upon us, that there is but one true God; if it as manifestly doth ascribe to the three Persons of the blessed Trinity the same august names, the same peculiar characters, the same divine attributes, the same superlatively admirable operations of creation and providence; if it also doth prescribe to them the same supreme honours, services, praises, and acknowledgments to be paid to them all; this may be abundantly enough to satisfy our minds, to stop our mouths, to smother all doubt and dispute about this high and holy mystery.”†

One observation more, before we proceed to the scriptural evidence of the positions above laid down, shall close this chapter. The proof of the doctrine of the Trinity, I have said, grounds itself on the firm foundation of the divine unity, and it closes with it; and this may set the true believer at rest, when he is assailed by the sophistical enemies of his faith with the charge of dividing his regards, as he directs his prayers to one or other of the three Persons of the Godhead. For the time at least, he is said to honour one to the exclu-

* Athanasian Creed.

† Dr. Barrow’s Defence of the Trinity.

sion of the others. The true scriptural doctrine of the unity of God will remove this objection. It is not the Socinian notion of unity. Theirs is the unity of one, ours the unity of three. We do not, however, as they seem to suppose, think the divine Essence divisible and participated by, and shared among, three persons; but wholly and undividedly possessed and enjoyed. Whether, therefore, we address our prayers and adorations to the Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, we address the same adorable Being, the one living and true God. “Jehovah, our *Aleim*, is one Jehovah.” With reference to the relations which each Person bears to us in the redeeming economy, our approaches to the Father are to be made through the mediation of the Son, and by, or with dependence upon, the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Yet, as the authority of the New Testament shows, this does not preclude direct prayer to Christ and to the Holy Spirit, and direct ascriptions of glory and honour to each. In all this we glorify the one “God over all, blessed for evermore.”

CHAPTER X.

Trinity :—Pre-existence of Christ.

By establishing, on scriptural authority, the pre-existence of our Lord, we take the first step in the demonstration of his absolute Divinity. His pre-existence, indeed, simply considered, does not evince his Godhead, and is not, therefore, a proof against the Arian hypothesis; but it destroys the Socinian notion, that he was a man only. For since no one contends for the pre-existence of human souls, (and if they did, the doctrine would be refuted by their own consciousness,) it is clear, that if Christ existed before his incarnation, he is not a mere man, whatever his nature, by other arguments, may be proved to be.

This point has been felt to press so heavily upon the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ, that both ancient and modern Socinians have bent against it all those arts of interpretation which, more than any thing else, show both the hopelessness of their cause, and the pertinacity with which they cling to oft and easily refuted error. I shall dwell a little on this point, because it will introduce some instances in illustration of the peculiar character of the Socinian mode of perverting the Scriptures.

The existence of our Lord prior to his incarnation might be forcibly argued from the declarations that he was “sent into the world;” that “he came in the flesh;” that “he took part of flesh and blood;” that he was “found in fashion as a man;” and other similar phrases. These are modes of speech which are used of no other person; which are never adopted to express the natural birth, and the commencement of the existence, of ordinary men; and which Socinianism, therefore, leaves without a reason, and without an explanation, when used of Christ. But arguments drawn from these phrases are

rendered wholly unnecessary, by the frequent occurrence of passages which explicitly declare his pre-existence, and by which the ingenuity of unsubmitive criticism has been always foiled; the interpretations given being too forced, and too unsupported, either by the common rules of criticism, or by the idioms of language, to produce the least impression upon any who are not previously disposed to torture the word of God in order to make it subservient to an error.

The first of these proofs of the pre-existence of Christ is from the testimony of the Baptist: "He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for he was before me;" (John i. 15;) or, as it is in verse 30, "After me cometh a man which is preferred before me, for he was before me."

The Socinian exposition is, "The Christ, who is to begin his ministry after me, has, by the divine appointment, been preferred before me, because he is my chief or principal." Thus they interpret the last clause, "for he was before me," in the sense of dignity, and not of time, though St. John uses the same word to denote priority of time, in several places of his Gospel. "If the world hate you, you know that it hated me before it hated you;" and in John i. 30; viii. 7; xx. 4, 8. If they take the phrase in the second clause, *εμπροσθεν* *με* *γεγοθεν*, in the sense of "preferred," then, by their mode of rendering the last clause, as Bishop Pearson has observed, "a thing is made the reason of itself, which is a great absurdity and a vain tautology." "He is preferred before me, because he is my chief;" whereas by taking *πρωτος* *με* in the sense of time, a reason for this preference is given. There is, however, another rendering of the second clause, which makes the passage still more impracticable in the sense of the Socinians: *Εμπροσθεν* is never in the Septuagint or in the New Testament used for dignity or rank, but refers either to place or time; and if taken in the sense of time, the rendering will be, "He that cometh after me was before me;" and *στι*, in the next clause, signifying "certainly," "truly,"* the last clause will be made emphatical, "certainly, he was before

* Schleusner *sub voce*.

me;" and is to be considered, not as giving a reason for the sentiment in the preceding clause, or as tautological, but as explanatory and impressive: A mode of speaking exceedingly natural when so great a doctrine and so high a mystery was to be declared, that he who was born after John was yet, in point of existence, before him;—"certainly he was before me." This rendering of the second clause is adopted by several eminent critics; but whether this, or the common version, be preferred, the verb in the last clause, "he was before me," sufficiently fixes *πρωτος* in the sense of priority of time. Had it referred to the rank and dignity of Christ, it would not have been, "He was," but, "He is, before me," *εστι*, not *ην*.

The passages which express that Christ came down from heaven are next to be considered. He styles himself "the bread of God which cometh down from heaven." "The living bread which came down from heaven." "He that cometh from above is above all; he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from heaven is above all;" and in his discourse with Nicodemus, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." In what manner are declarations so plain and unequivocal to be eluded, and by what arts are they to be interpreted into nothing? This shall be considered. Socinus and his early disciples, in order to account for these phrases, supposed that Christ, between the time of his birth and entrance upon his office, was translated into heaven, and there remained some time, that he might see and hear those things which he was to publish in the world. This hypothesis, however, only proves the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, of interpreting these passages, so as to turn away their hostile aspect from the errors of man. It is supported by no passage of Scripture, by no tradition, by no reason in the nature of the thing or in the discourse. The modern Socinians, therefore, finding the position of their elder brethren untenable, resolve the whole into figure,—the most convenient method of evading the difficulty, and tell us that, as we should naturally say, that

person who would become acquainted with the secret purposes of God must ascend to heaven to converse with him, and return, to make them known, so our Lord's words do not necessarily imply a literal ascent and descent, but merely this, "that he alone was admitted to an intimate knowledge of the divine will, and was commissioned to reveal it to men."*

In the passages quoted above, as declarations of the pre-existence of Christ, it will be seen, that there are two phrases to be accounted for,—“ascending into heaven,” and “coming down from heaven.” The former is said to mean the being admitted to an intimate knowledge of the divine counsels. But if this were the sense, it could not be true that “no man” had thus ascended, but “the Son of man;” since Moses and all the Prophets in succession had been admitted to “an intimate knowledge of the divine counsels,” and had been “commissioned” to reveal them. It is nothing to say that our Lord's acquaintance with the divine counsels was more deep and comprehensive. The case is not stated comparatively, but exclusively: “No man hath ascended into heaven, but the Son of man;” no man, but himself, had been in heaven.† Allowing, therefore, the principle of the Socinian gloss, it is totally inapplicable to the text in question, and is in fact directly refuted by it.

But the principle is false, and it may be denied that “to ascend into heaven” is a Hebrew phrase to express the knowledge of high and mysterious things. So utterly does this pretence fail, that not one of the passages they adduce in proof can be taken in any other than its literal meaning; and they are, therefore, as are others, directly against them. Deuteronomy xxx. 12, is first adduced: “Who shall go up for us into heaven, and bring it unto us?” This, we are told, we must take figuratively; but then, unhappily for them, it is also immediately subjoined, “Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us?” If the ascent into heaven in the first clause is to be taken

* Belsham's *Calm Inquiry*.

† “No man, except myself, ever was in heaven.”—*HEARCE*.

figuratively, then the going beyond the sea cannot be taken literally, and we shall still want a figurative interpretation for this part of the declaration of Moses respecting the law, which will not so easily be furnished. The same observation is applicable to Romans x. 6, in which there is an adaptation of the passage in Deuteronomy to the Gospel: "Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above," &c.; words which have no meaning unless place be literally understood, and which show that the Apostle, a sufficient judge of Hebrew modes of expression, understood in its literal sense the passage in Deuteronomy. A second passage to which they trust is Proverbs xxx. 4: "Who hath ascended and descended?" &c.; but if what immediately follows be added, "Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment?" &c., it will be seen that the passage has no reference to the acquisition of knowledge by a servant of God, but expresses the various operations in nature carried on by God himself. "Who hath done this? What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?"

In Baruch iii. 29, it is asked of wisdom, "Who hath gone up into heaven, and taken her, and brought her down from the clouds?" but it is here also added, "Or who hath gone over the sea for her?" Wisdom is, in this passage, clearly personified; a place of habitation is assigned her, which is to be sought out by those who would attain her. This apocryphal text, therefore, gives no countenance to the mystical notion of ascending into heaven, advanced by Socinian expositors.

If they, then, utterly fail to establish their forced and unnatural sense of ascending into heaven, let us examine whether they are more successful in establishing their opinion as to the meaning of "coming down from heaven." This, they say, means "to be commissioned to reveal the will of God to men;"* but if so, the phrases, "to ascend up into heaven," and "to come down from thence," which are manifestly

* Belsham's *Calm Inquiry*.

opposed to each other, lose all their opposition in the interpretation, which is sufficient to show, that it is, as to both, entirely gratuitous, arbitrary, and contradictory. For, as Dr. Magee has acutely remarked, “it is observed by the editors of the Unitarian Version, and enforced with much emphasis by Mr. Belsham and Dr. Carpenter, that to ‘ascend into heaven’ signifies, ‘to become acquainted with the truths of God,’ and that, consequently, the ‘correlative’ to this, (the opposite they should have said,) to ‘descend from heaven,’ must mean ‘to bring and to discover those truths to the world.’ (Improved Version, page 208; Calm Inquiry, page 48.) Now, allowing those gentlemen all they wish to establish as to the first clause,—that to go up into heaven means to learn and become acquainted with the counsels of God,—what must follow, then, if they reasoned justly upon their own principles? Plainly this, that to come down from heaven, being precisely the opposite of the former, must mean, to unlearn or to lose the knowledge of those counsels; so that, so far from bringing and discovering those counsels to mankind, our Lord must have disqualified himself from bringing any. Had, indeed, ‘ascending into heaven’ meant ‘bringing the truth,’ any where, ‘from men,’ then ‘descending from heaven’ might justly be said to mean ‘bringing it back to men.’ Whatever, in short, ‘ascending’ may be supposed to signify in any figure, ‘descending’ must signify the opposite, if the figure be abided by; and, therefore, if ‘to ascend’ be ‘to learn,’ ‘to descend’ must be ‘to unlearn.’”*

It is further fatal to this opinion that if “to come from heaven,” “to descend from heaven,” &c., signify, receiving a divine commission to teach; or, more simply, to communicate truth after it has been learned; it is never used with reference to Moses, or to any of the Prophets, or divinely-appointed instruments, who, from time to time, were raised up among the Jews. We may, therefore, conclude, that the meaning attached to these phrases by Socinian writers of the present day, who, in this respect, as in many others, have ventured a

step beyond their predecessors who never denied their literal acceptance, was unknown among the Jews, and is a mere subterfuge to escape from the plain testimony of holy writ on a point so fatal to their scheme.

The next passage which may be quoted as expressing, in unequivocal terms, the pre-existence of Christ, occurs, John vi. 62, and is, if possible, still more out of the reach of that kind of criticism which has just been exhibited. The occasion, too, fixes the sense beyond all perversion. Our Lord had told the Jews that he was the bread of life, which came down from heaven. This the Jews understood literally, and therefore asked, "Is not this the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?" His disciples, too, so understood his words; for they also "murmured." But our Lord, so far from removing that impression, so far from giving them the most distant hint of a mode of meeting the difficulty like that resorted to by Socinian writers, strengthens the assertion, and makes his profession a stumbling-block, still more formidable: "Doth this offend you?" referring to what he had just said, that he had descended from heaven: "What, and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?" Language cannot be more explicit; though Mr. Belsham has ventured to tell us that this means, "What, if I go farther out of your reach, and become more perplexing and mysterious?" And, indeed, perplexing and mysterious enough would be the words both of Christ and his Apostles, if they required such criticisms for their elucidation.

The phrase to be "sent from God," they think they sufficiently avert, by urging that it is said of the Baptist, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." This, they urge, clearly evinces, "that 'to come from God' is to be commissioned by him. If Jesus was sent from God, so was John the Baptist; if the former came down from heaven, so did the latter." This reasoning must be allowed to be fallacious, if it can be shown that it contradicts other scriptures. Now our Lord says, "No one hath seen the Father, save he who is from God," *οὐτος*, "he hath seen the Father;" (John

vi. 46;) namely, this one person, for it is singular, and no one else hath seen the Father. Therefore, if Christ was that person, as will not be disputed, John could not be “sent from God,” in the same manner that Christ was. What does the Baptist say of himself? Does he confirm the Socinian gloss? Speaking of Christ and of himself, he says, “He that cometh from above is above all; he that is of the earth is earthly; he that cometh from heaven is above all.” (John iii. 31.) Here John contrasts his earthly origin with Christ’s heavenly origin. Christ is “from above;” John from “the earth,” *ἐκ τῆς γῆς*. Christ is “above all;” which he could not be, if every other Prophet came in like manner from heaven, and from above; and, therefore, if John was “sent from God,” it cannot be in the same sense that Christ was sent from him, which is enough to silence the objection.* Thus, says Dr. Nares, “we have nothing but the positive contradictions of the Unitarian party, to prove to us that Christ did not come from heaven, though he says of himself, he did come from heaven; that, though he declares he had seen the Father, he had not seen the Father; that, though he assures us that he in a most peculiar and singular manner came forth from God, (*ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐξηλθεν*, a strong and singular expression,) he came from him no otherwise than like the Prophets of old, and his own immediate forerunner.”†

Several other equally striking passages might claim our attention; but it will be sufficient for the argument to close it with two of them:—

“Before Abraham was, I am.” (John viii. 58.) Whether the verb *εἰμι*, “I am,” may be understood to be equivalent to the incommunicable name “Jehovah,” shall be considered in another place. The obvious sense of the passage at least is, “Before Abraham was, or was born, I was in existence.” Abraham, the Patriarch, was the person spoken of; for the Jews having said, “Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?” our Lord declares, with his peculiarly solemn mode of introduction, “Verily, verily, I say unto you,

* Holden’s Scripture Testimonies.

† Remarks on the Improved Version.

Before Abraham was, I am." I had priority of existence, "together with a continuation of it to the present time."* Nor did the Jews mistake his meaning; but, being filled with indignation at so manifest a claim of Divinity, "they took up stones to stone him."

How, then, do the Socinians dispose of this passage? The two hypotheses on which they have rested, (for one would not suffice,) are, first, "that Christ existed before the Patriarch Abraham had become, according to the import of his name, the Father of many nations, that is, before the Gentiles were called;" which was as true of the Jews who were discoursing with him, as of himself. The second is, "Before Abraham was born, I am he, that is, the Christ, in the destination and appointment of God;" which also was saying nothing peculiar of Christ; since the existence, and the part which every one of his hearers was to act, were as much in the destination and appointment of God as his own. Both these absurdities are well exposed by Bishop Pearson:—

"The first interpretation makes our Saviour thus to speak: 'Do ye so much wonder how I should have seen Abraham, who am not yet fifty years old? Do ye imagine so great a contradiction in this? I tell you, (and be ye most assured that what I speak unto you at this time is most certainly and infallibly true, and most worthy of your observation, which moves me not to deliver it without this solemn asseveration, Verily, verily, I say unto you,) Before Abraham shall perfectly become that which was signified in his name, the father of many nations,—before the Gentiles shall come in, I am. Nor be ye troubled at this answer, or think in this I magnify myself; for what I speak is as true of you yourselves as it is of me: Before Abram be thus made Abraham, ye are. Doubt ye not, therefore, as ye did, nor ever make that question again, whether I have seen Abraham.'

"The second explication makes a sense of another nature, but with the same impertinency: 'Do ye continue still to question, and with so much admiration do ye look upon my

age and ask, Hast thou seen Abraham? I confess it is more than eighteen hundred years since that Patriarch died, and less than forty since I was born at Bethlehem: But look not on this computation, for before Abraham was born I was. But mistake me not, I mean that I was in the foreknowledge and decree of God. Nor do I magnify myself in this, for ye also were so.' How either of these answers should give any reasonable satisfaction to the question, or the least occasion of the Jews' exasperation, is not to be understood. And that our Saviour should speak any such impertinences as these interpretations bring forth, is not by a Christian to be conceived. Wherefore, as the plain and most obvious sense is a proper and full answer to the question, and most likely to exasperate the unbelieving Jews; as those strained explications render the words of Christ, not only impertinent to the occasion, but vain and useless to the hearers of them; as our Saviour gave this answer in words of another language, most probably incapable of any such interpretations; we must adhere unto that literal sense already delivered, by which it appeareth Christ had a being, as before John, so also before Abraham, and consequently by that he did exist two thousand years before he was born, or conceived by the virgin."*

The observations of Whitaker on this decisive passage, are in his usual energetic manner:—

“ ‘Your Father Abraham,’ says our Saviour to the Jews, ‘rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.’ Our Saviour thus proposes himself to his countrymen, as their Messiah; that grand object of hope and desire to their fathers, and particularly to this first father of the faithful, Abraham. But his countrymen, not acknowledging his claim to the character of Messiah, and therefore not allowing his supernatural priority of existence to Abraham, chose to consider his words in a signification merely human. ‘Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?’ But what does our Saviour reply to this low and gross comment upon his intimation? Does he retract it, by warping

* Exposition of the Creed.

his language to their poor perverseness, and so waving his pretensions to the assumed dignity? No! to have so acted would have been derogatory to his dignity, and injurious to their interests; he actually repeats his claim to the character; he actually enforces his pretensions to a supernatural priority of existence; he even heightens both; he mounts up far beyond Abraham; he ascends beyond all the orders of creation; and he places himself with God, at the head of the universe. He thus arrogates to himself all that high pitch of dignity which the Jews expected their Messiah to assume. This he does too in the most energetic manner, that his simplicity of language, so natural to inherent greatness, would possibly admit. He also introduces what he says, with much solemnity in the form, and with more in the repetition. ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you,’ he cries, ‘Before Abraham was, I am.’ He says not of himself, as he says of Abraham, ‘Before he was, I was.’ This indeed would have been sufficient to affirm his existence previous to Abraham. But it would not have been sufficient to declare, what he now meant to assert, his full claim to the majesty of the Messiah. He therefore drops all forms of language, that could be accommodated to the mere creatures of God. He arrests one, that was appropriate to the Godhead itself. ‘Before Abraham was,’ or, still more properly, ‘Before Abraham was made,’ he says, ‘I am.’ He thus gives himself the signature of uncreated and continual existence, in direct opposition to contingent and created. He says of himself,

That an eternal *now* for ever lasts

with him. He attaches to himself that very stamp of eternity which God appropriates to his Godhead in the Old Testament; and from which an Apostle afterwards describes ‘Jesus Christ,’ expressly, to be ‘the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.’ Nor did the Jews pretend to misunderstand him now; they could not; they heard him directly and decisively vindicating the noblest rights of their Messiah, and the highest honours of their God, to himself; they considered him as a mere pretender to those; they therefore looked upon him as a

blasphemous arrogator of these. ‘Then took they up stones, to cast at him’ as a blasphemer; as what indeed he was in his pretensions to be God, if he had not been in reality their Messiah and their God in one. But he instantly proved himself, to their very senses, to be both; by exerting the energetic powers of his Godhead upon them. For he ‘hid himself; and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them; and so passed by.’”

The last passage which I shall quote, may properly, both from its dignity and explicitness, close the whole: “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” (John xvii. 5.) Whatever this glory was, it was possessed by Christ before the world was; or, as he afterwards expresses it, “before the foundation of the world.” That question is therefore not to be confounded with the main point which determines the pre-existence of our Lord; for if he was with the Father, and had a glory with him before the world was, and of which “he emptied himself” when he became man, then he had an existence, not only before his incarnation, but before the very “foundation of the world.” The Socinian gloss is, “the glory which I had with thee, in thy immutable decree, before the world was; or which thou didst decree, before the world was, to give me.” But *ἡ εἶχον παρὰ σοι*, “which I had with thee,” cannot bear any such sense. The occasion was too peculiar to admit of any mystical, forced, or parabolical modes of speech. It was in the hearing of his disciples, just before he went out into the garden, that these words were spoken; and, as it has been well observed, it is remarkable, that he introduces the mention of this glory, when it was not necessary to complete the sense of any proposition. And yet, as if on purpose to prevent the Apostles, who heard his prayer, from supposing that he was asking that which he had not possessed in any former period, he adds, “with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” So decisive is this passage, that, as Dr. Harwood says, “were there no intimation in the whole New Testament of the pre-existence of Christ, this single passage would irrefragably demonstrate and establish it.

Our Saviour here, in a solemn act of devotion, declares to the Almighty, that he had glory with him before the world was, and fervently supplicates that he would be graciously pleased to re-instate him in his former felicity. The language is plain and clear. Every word has great moment and emphasis: ‘Glorify thou me with that glory which I enjoyed in thy presence, before the world was.’ Upon this single text I lay my finger; here I posit my system; and if plain words be designedly employed to convey any determinate meaning, if the modes of human speech have any precision, I am convinced, that this plain declaration of our Lord, in an act of devotion, exhibits a great and important truth, which can never be subverted or invalidated by any accurate and satisfactory criticism.”*

Whatever, therefore, the true nature of our Lord Jesus Christ may be, we have at least discovered from the plainest possible testimonies,—testimonies which no criticism, and no unlicensed and paraphrastic comments, have been able to shake or to obscure,—that he had an existence previous to his incarnation, and previous to the very “foundation of the world.” If then we find that the same titles and works which are ascribed to him in the New Testament are ascribed to a divine Person in the Old, who is yet represented as distinct from God the Father, and especially to one who was to come into the world to fulfil the very offices which our Lord has actually fulfilled, we shall have obtained another step in this inquiry, and shall have exhibited lofty proof, not only of the pre-existence of Christ, but also of his Divinity. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

• Socinian Scheme.

CHAPTER XI.

Trinity :—Jesus Christ the Jehovah of the Old Testament.

IN reading the Scriptures of the Old Testament, it is impossible not to mark, with serious attention, the frequent visible appearances of God to the Patriarchs and Prophets; and, what is still more singular, his visible residence in a cloud of glory, both among the Jews in the wilderness and in their sacred tabernacle and temple.

The fact of such appearances cannot be disputed; they are allowed by all; and in order to point out the bearing of this fact upon the point at issue, the Divinity of Christ, it is necessary,

1. To show that the person who made these appearances was truly a divine Person.

The proofs of this are, that he bears the names of “Jehovah,” “God,” and other divine appellations; and that he dwelt among the Israelites as the object of their supreme worship; the worship of a people, the first precept of whose law was, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” The proofs are copious, but quotations shall not be needlessly multiplied.

When the Angel of the Lord found Hagar in the wilderness, “she called the name of Jehovah that spake to her, Thou God seest me.” Jehovah appeared unto Abraham in the plains of Mamre. Abraham lifted up his eyes, and three men, three persons in human form, stood by him. One of the three is called “Jehovah.” “And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?” Two of the three depart, but He to whom this high appellation is given remains: “But Abraham stood yet before Jehovah.” This Jehovah is called by Abraham, in the conversation which followed, “the Judge of all the earth;” and the account of the solemn interview is thus closed by the historian: “The

Lord," Jehovah, "went his way as soon as he had left off communing with Abraham." Appearances of the same Personage occur to Isaac and to Jacob under the name of "the God of Abraham, and of Isaac." After one of these manifestations, Jacob says, "I have seen God face to face;" and at another, "Surely the Lord," Jehovah, "is in this place." The same Jehovah was made visible to Moses, and gave him his commission; and God said, "I am that I am; thou shalt say to the children of Israel, I am hath sent me unto you." The same Jehovah went before the Israelites by day in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire; and by him the law was given amidst terrible displays of power and majesty from Mount Sinai. "I am the Lord," Jehovah, "thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage: Thou shalt have no other gods before me," &c. "Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?" This same Personage commanded the Israelites to build him a sanctuary, that he might reside among them; and when it was erected, he took possession of it in a visible form, which was called "the glory of the Lord." There the Schechinah, the visible token of the presence of Jehovah, rested, above the ark; there he was consulted on all occasions; and there he received their worship from age to age. Sacrifices were offered; sin was confessed and pardoned by him; and the book of Psalms is a collection of the hymns which were sung to his honour in the tabernacle and temple services, where he is constantly celebrated as Jehovah the God of Israel; the "Jehovah God of their fathers;" and the object of their own exclusive hope and trust: All the works of creation are in those sublime compositions ascribed to him; and he is honoured and adored as the Governor of all nations, and the sole Ruler among the children of men. In a word, to mark his Divinity in the strongest possible manner, all blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, "light and defence, grace and glory," are sought at his hands.

Thus the same glorious Being, bearing the appellation of "Jehovah," is seen as the object of the worship and trust

of ages, and that under a visible manifestation ; displaying attributes, engaged in operations, and assuming dignities and honours, which unequivocally array him with the majesty of absolute Divinity.

To this the objections which have been made, admit of a most satisfactory answer.

The first is, that this Personage is also called “ the Angel of the Lord.” This is true ; but if that “ Angel of the Lord ” is the same Person as he is who is called “ Jehovah,” the same as he who gave the law in his own name, then it is clear that the term “ Angel ” does not indicate a created being, and is a designation not of nature, but of office ; which will be just now accounted for, and is not at all inconsistent with his true and proper Divinity.

The collation of a few passages, or of the different parts of the same passages, of Scripture, will show that Jehovah and “ the Angel of the Lord,” when used in this eminent sense, are the same person. Jacob says of Bethel, where he had exclaimed, “ Surely Jehovah is in this place,” “ The Angel of God appeared to me in a dream, saying, I am the God of Bethel.” Upon his death-bed he gives the names of “ God ” and “ Angel ” to this same person : “ The God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.” So in Hosea xii. 3—5, it is said, “ By his strength he had power with God ; yea, he had power over the Angel, and prevailed : He found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us ; even the Lord God of Hosts ; the Lord is his memorial.” Here the same person has the names, “ God,” “ Angel,” and “ Lord God of Hosts.” “ The Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord,” Jehovah, “ that, since thou hast done this thing, in blessing I will bless thee.” “ The Angel of the Lord ” appeared to Moses in a flame of fire ; but this same Angel of the Lord “ called to him out of the bush, and said, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ; and Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.” To omit many other pas-

sages, St. Stephen, in alluding to this part of the history of Moses, in his speech before the council, says, "There appeared to Moses in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, an Angel of the Lord in a flame of fire," showing that that phraseology was in use among the Jews in his day, and that this Angel and Jehovah were regarded as the same Being; for he adds, "Moses was in the church in the wilderness with the Angel which spoke unto him in Mount Sinai." There is one part of the history of the Jews in the wilderness, which so fully shows that they distinguished this Angel of Jehovah from all created angels, as to deserve particular attention. In Exodus xxxiii. 20, 21, God makes this promise to Moses and the Israelites: "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: For my name is in him." Of this Angel let it be observed, that he is here represented as the guide and protector of the Israelites; to him they were to owe their conquests and their settlement in the promised land, which are in other places often attributed to the immediate agency of God; that they are cautioned to "beware of him," to reverence and stand in dread of him; that the pardoning of transgressions belongs to him; finally, "that the name of God was in him." This name must be understood of God's own peculiar name, "Jehovah, I am," which he assumed as his distinctive appellation at his first appearing to Moses; and as the names of God are indicative of his nature, he who had a right to bear the peculiar name of God, must also have his essence. This view is put beyond all doubt by the fact, that Moses and the Jews so understood the promise; for afterwards when their sins had provoked God to threaten not to go up with them himself, but to commit them to "an angel who should drive out the Canaanite," &c., the people mourned over this as a great calamity, and Moses betook himself to special intercession, and rested not until he obtained the repeal of the threat, and the renewed promise, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Nothing, therefore, can be more clear than that Moses and the

Israelites considered the promise of the Angel, in whom was "the name of God," as a promise that God himself would go with them. With this uncreated Angel, this presence of the Lord, they were satisfied ; but not with an angel, indefinitely, with an angel, not so by office only, as was the appearing Angel of the Old Testament, but who was by nature of that order of beings usually so called, and therefore a created being. At the news of God's determination not to go up with them, Moses hastens to the tabernacle to make his intercessions, and refuses an inferior conductor. "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence."*

That the Angel of Jehovah is constantly represented as Jehovah himself, and, therefore, as a divine Person, is so manifest, that the means resorted to, to evade the force of the argument which so immediately flashes from it, acknowledge the fact. Those who deny the Divinity of our Lord, however, endeavour to elude the consequence according to their respective creeds. The Arians, who think the appearing Angel to have been Christ, but who yet deny him to be Jehovah himself, assume that this glorious but created being personated the Deity, and, as his ambassador and representative, spoke by his authority, and took his name. Thus, a modern Arian observes : "The angel takes the name of Jehovah, because it

* From this remarkable passage it appears to me very clear, that the Messenger or Angel of God, whom he here promises to be the leader of his people, is not a creature, much less Moses or Joshua, but an uncreated Angel. For, 1. The clause, "He will not pardon your sins," is not applicable to any created being, whether angel or man. 2. The next words, "My name is in him," cannot be explained to signify, "He shall act in my name," that is, under my command or by authority received from me ; for in that case another word, "he will act," or "he will speak," or the like, would have been added. 3. The same conclusion is established by a comparison of this passage with chap. xxxii. 34, and xxxiii. 2, where God expresses his indignation against the Israelites for their idolatry, by declaring that not himself, but an angel, should be henceforth their guide ; but this, the people and Moses most earnestly deprecate, as a calamity and a judgment ; whereas the present instance is a promise of favour and mercy, and is so acknowledged in Isaiah lxiii. 9. "That angel, therefore, is perfectly different from him who is spoken of in this passage before us, who is the same that appeared to Moses, chap. iii. 2, and there likewise both speaks and acts as God himself."—DATHII *Pentateuchus*.

is a common maxim, *Loquitur legatus sermone mittentis eum*, as an ambassador in the name of his King, or the *fecialis* when he denounced war in the name of the Roman people; and what is done by the angel is said to be done by God, according to another maxim, *Qui facit per alium, facit per se.*”* The answer to this is, that though ambassadors speak in the name of their masters, they do not apply the names and titles of their masters to themselves;† that the unquestionably created angels, mentioned in Scripture as appearing to men, declare that they were sent by God, and never personate him; that the Prophets uniformly declare their commission to be from God; that God himself declares, “Jehovah is my name, and my glory will I not give to another;” and yet, that the appearing Angel calls himself, as we have seen, by this incommunicable name in almost innumerable instances; and that, though the object of the Mosaic dispensation was to preserve men from idolatry, yet this Angel claims and receives the exclusive worship both of the Patriarchs to whom he occasionally appeared, and of the Jews among whom he visibly resided for ages. It is, therefore, a proposition too monstrous to be for a moment sustained, that a created being of any kind should thus allure men into idolatry, by acting the Deity, assuming his name, and attributing to himself God’s peculiar and incommunicable perfections and honour.‡ The Arian hypothesis, on this subject, is well answered by even a Socinian writer: “The whole transaction on Mount Sinai shows, that Jehovah was present, and acted, and not another for him. It is the God that had delivered them out of Egypt, with whom they were to enter into cove-

* Taylor, Ben Mordecai.

† “An earthly ambassador, indeed, represents the person of his Prince, is supposed to be clothed with his authority, and speaks and acts in his name. But whoever heard of an ambassador assuming the very name of his Sovereign, or being honoured with it by others? Would one in this character be permitted to say, ‘I George, I Louis, I Frederic?’ As the idea is ridiculous, the action would justly be accounted high treason.”—JAMIESON’S *Vindication*.

‡ —*Histrioniam exerceisse, in quâ Dei nomen assumat, et omnia, quæ Dei sunt, sibi attribuat.*—BISHOP BULL.

nant as their God, and who thereupon accepted them as his people, who was the author of their religion and laws, and who himself delivered to them those ten commands, the most sacred part. There is nothing to lead us to imagine that the Person, who was their God, did not speak in his own name ; not the least intimation that here was another representing him.”*

The author of the Essay on Spirit attempts to meet this by alleging, that “ the Hebrews were far from being explicit and accurate in their style, and that it was customary for Prophets and angels to speak in the name and character of God.” The reply of Dr. Randolph is able and decisive ; and, as this is a point of great importance, its introduction will not appear unnecessary :—

“ Some, to evade these strong proofs of our Lord’s Divinity, have asserted that this was only a created angel appearing in the name or person of the Father ; it being customary in Scripture for one person to sustain the character, and act and speak in the name, of another. But these assertions want proof. I find no instances of one person acting and speaking in the name of another, without first declaring in whose name he acts and speaks. The instances usually alleged are nothing to the purpose. If we sometimes find an angel in the book of Revelation speaking in the name of God, yet from the context it will be easy to show that this angel was the great Angel, the Angel of the covenant. But if there should be some instances, in the poetical or prophetical parts of Scripture, of an abrupt change of persons, where the person speaking is not particularly specified, this will by no means come up to the case before us. Here is a person sustaining the name and character of the most high God, from one end of the Bible to the other ; bearing his glorious and fearful name, the incommunicable name ‘Jehovah,’ expressive of his necessary existence, sitting in the throne of God ; dwelling and presiding in his temple ; delivering laws in his name ; giving out oracles ; hearing prayers ; forgiving sins. And yet these writers would persuade us, that this was only a tutelary angel, that a creature

* Lindsey’s Apology.

was the God of Israel, and that to this creature all their service and worship was directed ; that the great God ‘ whose name is Jealous,’ was pleased to give his glory, his worship, his throne, to a creature. What is this but to make the law of God himself introductory of the same idolatry that was practised by all the nations of the Heathen ? But we are told, that ‘ bold figures of speech are common in the Hebrew language, which is not to be tied down in its interpretation to the severer rules of modern criticism.’ We may be assured that these opinions are indefensible, which cannot be supported without charging the word of God with want of propriety or perspicuity. Such pretences might be borne with, if the question were about a phrase or two in the poetical or prophetical parts of Scripture. But this, if it be a figure, is a figure which runs through the whole Scripture. And a bold interpreter must he be, who supposes that such figures are perpetually and uniformly made use of in a point of such importance, without any meaning at all. This is to confound the use of language, to make the holy Scripture a mysterious unintelligible book, sufficient to prove nothing, or rather to prove any thing which a wild imagination shall suggest.”*

If the Arian account of the Angel of Jehovah be untenable, the Socinian notion will be found equally unsupported, and, indeed, ridiculous. Dr. Priestley assumes the marvellous doctrine of “ occasional personality,” and thinks that “ in some cases angels were nothing more than temporary appearances, and no permanent beings ; the mere organs of the Deity, assumed for the purpose of making himself known.” He speaks, therefore, of “ a power occasionally emitted, and then taken back again into its source ;” of this power being vested with a temporary personality ; and thinks this possible. Little cause had the Doctor and his adherents to talk of the mystery and absurdity of the doctrine of three Persons in one Godhead, who can make a person out of a power, emitted and then drawn back again to its source ; a temporary person, without individual subsistence. The wildness of this fiction is its own

* Randolph’s Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity.

refutation ; but that the Angel of Jehovah was not this temporary occasional person, produced or “ emitted ” for the occasion of these appearances, is made certain by Abraham’s “ walking before this Angel of the Lord,” that is, ordering his life and conversation in his sight, all the days of his life ; by Jacob calling him the “ Angel of the Lord ” who had “ fed him all his life long ; ” and by this also, that the same Person who was called, by himself and by the Jews, “ the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob,” was the God of the chosen people in all their generations. Mr. Lindsey says, “ that the outward token of the presence of God is what is generally meant by the ‘ Angel ’ of God, when not particularly specified and appropriated otherwise ; that which manifested his appearance, whatever it was ; ” and this opinion commonly obtains among the Socinians. “ The Angel of the Lord was the visible symbol of the divine presence.”* This notion, however, involves a whole train of absurdities. The term, “ the Angel of Jehovah,” is not at all accounted for by a visible symbol of clouds, light, fire, &c., unless that symbol be considered as distinct from Jehovah. We have then the name “ Jehovah ” given to a cloud, a light, a fire, &c. ; the fire is the “ Angel of the Lord,” and yet the “ Angel of the Lord ” calls to Moses out of the fire. This visible symbol says to Abraham, “ By myself I have sworn,” for these are said to be the words of the “ Angel of Jehovah ; ” and this Angel, the visible symbol, spake to Moses on Mount Sinai : Such are the absurdities which flow from error. Most clearly, therefore, is it determined, on the testimony of several scriptures, and by necessary induction from the circumstances attending the numerous appearances of the Angel of Jehovah in the Old Testament, that the Person thus manifesting himself, and thus receiving supreme worship, was not a created angel, as the Arians would have it, nor a meteor, an atmospheric appearance, the worthy theory of modern Socinians, but that he was a divine Person.

2. It will be necessary to show that this divine Person was not God the Father.

* Belsham.

The following argument has been adopted in proof of this : “ ‘ No man hath seen God at any time.’ ‘ Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.’ ‘ Not that any man hath seen the Father.’ It is, however, said in the Old Testament, that God frequently appeared under the patriarchal and Levitical dispensations ; and, therefore, we must conclude, that the God who appeared was God the Son.”

Plausible as this argument is, it cannot be depended upon ; for that the Father never manifested himself to men, as distinct from the Son, is contradicted by two express testimonies. We have seen that the Angel in whom was the name of God, promised as the conductor of the Israelites through the wilderness, was a divine Person. But he who promised to send him, must be a different Person from the Angel sent, and that Person could be no other than the Father. “ Behold, I send an Angel before thee,” &c. On this occasion, therefore, Moses heard the voice of the Father. Again, at the baptism of Jesus, the voice of the Father was heard, declaring, “ This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” The above passages must be, therefore, interpreted to accord with these facts. They express the pure spirituality and invisibility of God, and can no more be argued against a sensible manifestation of God by audible sounds and appearances, than the declaration to Moses, “ No man can see my face, and live.” There was an important sense in which Moses neither did nor could see God ; and yet it is equally true, that he both saw him and heard him. He saw the “ backward parts,” but not the “ face of God.” *

The manifestation of the Father was, however, very rare ; as is evident from by far the greater part of these divine appearances being expressly called appearances of “ the Angel of the Lord.” The Jehovah who appeared to Abram in the case of Sodom, was an Angel. The Jehovah who appeared to Hagar, is said also to be “ the Angel of the Lord.” It was “ the Angel of Jehovah from heaven” who swore by himself to Abraham, “ In blessing I will bless thee.” Jacob calls the

* *Imperscrutabilem Dei essentiam et majestatem.* – Vatable.

“God of Bethel,” that is, the God who appeared to him there, and to whom he vowed his vows, “the Angel of God.” In blessing Joseph, he calls the God “in whose presence my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, have walked,” “the Angel” who had redeemed him from all evil. “I am that I am,” when he spoke to Moses out of the bush, is termed “the Angel of Jehovah.” The God who spake these words and said, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me,” is called “the Angel” who spake to Moses in the Mount Sinai. The Being who dwelt in a fiery cloud, the visible token of the presence of God, and took up his residence over the ark, in the holiest place, and there received the constant worship of the Jews, is called, “the Angel of the Lord;” and so in many other instances.

Nor is there any reason for stretching the point, to exclude in all cases the visible or audible agency of the Father, from the Old Testament : Not the least advantage is gained by it ; and it cannot be maintained without sanctioning by example the conduct of the opposers of truth, in giving forced and unnatural expositions to several passages of Scripture. This ought to be avoided, and a consistency of fair, honest interpretation be maintained throughout. It is amply sufficient for the important argument with which we are now concerned, to prove, not that the Father was never manifested in his own person ; but that the Angel of the Lord, whose appearances are so often recorded, is not the Father. This is clear from his appellation “Angel,” with respect to which there can be but two interpretations. It is either a name descriptive of nature or of office. In the first view it is generally employed in the sacred Scriptures to designate one of an order of intelligences superior to man, and often employed in the service of man as the ministers of God, but still beings finite and created. We have, however, already proved that the Angel of the Lord is not a creature, and he is not therefore called an Angel with reference to his nature. The term must then be considered as a term of office. He is called “the Angel of the Lord,” because he was the Messenger of the Lord ; because he was sent to execute his will, and to be his visible image and representative. His office therefore under this appellation was

ministerial ; but ministration is never attributed to the Father. He who was sent must be a distinct person from him by whom he was sent ; the messenger, from him whose message he brought, and whose will he performed. The Angel of Jehovah is therefore a different person from the Jehovah whose messenger he was ; and yet the Angel himself is Jehovah, and, as we have proved, truly divine. Thus does the Old Testament most clearly reveal to us, in the case of Jehovah and the Angel of Jehovah, two divine Persons, whilst it still maintains its great fundamental principle, that there is but one God.

3. The third step in this argument is, that the divine Person, called so often “the Angel of Jehovah,” in the Old Testament, was the promised and future Christ, and consequently Jesus, the Lord and Saviour of the Christian church.

We have seen, that it was the Angel of Jehovah who gave the law to the Israelites, and that in his own name, though still an Angel, a Messenger in the transaction ; being at once Servant and Lord, Angel and Jehovah,—circumstances which can only be explained on the hypothesis of his Divinity, and of which neither Arianism nor Socinianism can give any solution. He therefore was the person who made the covenant, usually called the Mosaic, with the children of Israel. The Prophet Jeremiah, however, expressly says, that the new covenant with Israel was to be made by the same person who had made the old : “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah ; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.” The Angel of Jehovah, who led the Israelites out of Egypt and gave them their law, is here plainly introduced as the Author of the new covenant. If then, as we learn from the Apostle Paul, this new covenant predicted by Jeremiah is the Christian dispensation, and Christ be its Author ; the Christ of the New Testament, and the Angel of Jehovah of the Old, are the same person.

Equally striking is the celebrated prediction in Malachi, the

last of the Prophets: "Behold, I will send my Messenger, and he shall prepare my way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts."

The characters under which the person who is the subject of this prophecy is described, are, the Lord, a sovereign Ruler,* the owner of the temple, and therefore a divine Prince, or Governor: He "shall come to his temple." "The temple," says Bishop Horsley, "in the writings of a Jewish Prophet, cannot be otherwise understood, according to the literal meaning, than of the temple at Jerusalem. Of this temple, therefore, the person to come is here expressly called 'the Lord.' The lord of any temple, in the language of all writers, and in the natural meaning of the phrase, is the Divinity to whose worship it is consecrated. To no other Divinity the temple of Jerusalem was consecrated than the true and everlasting God, the Lord Jehovah, the Maker of heaven and earth. Here, then, we have the express testimony of Malachi, that the Christ, the Deliverer, whose coming he announces, was no other than the Jehovah of the Old Testament. Jehovah had delivered the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage; and the same Jehovah was to come in person to his temple, to effect the greater and more general deliverance of which the former was but an imperfect type."

He bears also the same title, "Angel" or "Messenger," as he whose appearances in the Old Testament have been enumerated.

"The Messenger of the Covenant, therefore, is Jehovah's Messenger; if his Messenger, his Servant; for a message is a service: It implies a person sending, and a person sent. In the person who sendeth there must be authority to send; submission to that authority in the person sent. The Messenger, therefore, of the Covenant is the Servant of the Lord Jehovah: But the same person who is the Messenger is the

* The same word is often applied to Magistrates, and even fathers; but J. H. Michaëlis says, that when it occurs, as in this place, with the prefix, it is appropriated only to God.

Lord Jehovah himself, not the same person with the sender, but bearing the same name ; because united in that mysterious nature and undivided substance which the name imports. The same person, therefore, is Servant and Lord ; and, by uniting these characters in the same person, what does the Prophet but describe that great mystery of the Gospel,—the union of the nature which governs and the nature which serves,—the union of the divine and human nature in the person of the Christ ? ” *

Now this prophecy is expressly applied to Christ by St. Mark : “ The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as it is written, Behold, I send my Messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.” It follows from this, that Jesus is the Lord, the Lord of the temple, the Messenger of the Covenant mentioned in the prophecy : And, bearing these exact characters of the appearing Angel Jehovah of the Old Testament, who was the King of the Jews ; whose temple was his, because he resided in it, and so was called “ the house of the Lord ; ” and who was “ the Messenger ” of their Covenant ; the identity of the persons cannot be mistaken. One coincidence is singularly striking. It has been proved, that the Angel Jehovah had his residence in the Jewish tabernacle and temple, and that he took possession of, or came suddenly to, both, at their dedication, and filled them with his glory. On one occasion Jesus himself, though in his state of humiliation, comes in public procession to the temple at Jerusalem, and calls it his own ; thus at once declaring that he was the ancient and rightful Lord of the temple, and appropriating to himself this eminent prophecy. Bishop Horsley has introduced this circumstance in his usual striking and convincing manner :—

“ A third time Jesus came still more remarkably as the Lord to his temple, when he came up from Galilee to celebrate the last passover, and made that public entry at Jerusalem which is described by all the Evangelists. It will be necessary to enlarge upon the particulars of this interesting story :

For the right understanding of our Saviour's conduct upon this occasion depends so much upon seeing certain leading circumstances in a proper light,—upon a recollection of ancient prophecies, and an attention to the customs of the Jewish people,—that I am apt to suspect, few now-a-days discern in this extraordinary transaction what was clearly seen in it at the time by our Lord's disciples, and in some measure understood by his enemies. I shall present you with an orderly detail of the story, and comment upon the particulars as they arise: And I doubt not but that by God's assistance I shall teach you to perceive in this public entry of Jesus of Nazareth, (if you have not perceived it before,) a conspicuous advent of the great Jehovah to his temple. Jesus, on his last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, stops at the foot of Mount Olivet, and sends two of his disciples to a neighbouring village to provide an ass's colt to convey him from that place to the city, distant not more than half a mile. The colt is brought, and Jesus is seated upon it. This first circumstance must be well considered; it is the key to the whole mystery of the story. What could be his meaning in choosing this singular conveyance? It could not be that the fatigue of the short journey which remained was likely to be too much for him a-foot; and that no better animal was to be procured. Nor was the ass in these days (though it had been in earlier ages) an animal in high esteem in the East, used for travelling or for state by persons of the first condition, that this conveyance should be chosen for the grandeur or propriety of the appearance. Strange as it may seem, the coming to Jerusalem upon an ass's colt was one of the prophetic characters of the Messiah; and the great singularity of it had perhaps been the reason that this character had been more generally attended to than any other; so that there was no Jew who was not apprized that the Messiah was to come to the holy city in that manner. 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem;' saith Zechariah: 'Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even a colt, the foal of an ass!' And this prophecy the Jews never understood of any other person than the Messiah.

Jesus, therefore, by seating himself upon the ass's colt in order to go to Jerusalem, without any possible inducement either of grandeur or convenience, openly declared himself to be that King who was to come, and at whose coming in that manner Zion was to rejoice. And so the disciples, if we may judge from what immediately followed, understood this proceeding ; for no sooner did they see their Master seated on the colt, than they broke out into transports of the highest joy, as if in this great sight they had the full contentment of their utmost wishes ; conceiving, as it should seem, the sanguine hope that the kingdom was this instant to be restored to Israel. They strewed the way which Jesus was to pass with the green branches of the trees which grew beside it ; a mark of honour in the east, never paid but to the greatest Emperors on occasions of the highest pomp. They proclaimed him the long-expected heir of David's throne,—the Blessed One coming in the name of the Lord ; that is, in the language of Malachi, 'the Messenger of the Covenant ;' and they rent the skies with the exulting acclamation of 'Hosanna in the highest !' On their way to Jerusalem, they are met by a great multitude from the city, whom the tidings had no sooner reached than they ran out in eager joy to join his triumph. When they reached Jerusalem, 'the whole city,' says the blessed Evangelist, 'was moved.' Here recollect, that it was now the season of the passover. The passover was the highest festival of the Jewish nation, the anniversary of that memorable night when Jehovah led his armies out of Egypt with an high hand and an extended arm,—'a night much to be remembered to the Lord of the children of Israel in their generations ;' and much, indeed, it was remembered. The devout Jews flocked at this season to Jerusalem, not only from every corner of Judea, but from the remotest countries whither God had scattered them ; and the numbers of the strangers that were annually collected in Jerusalem during this festival, are beyond imagination. These strangers, who living at a distance knew little of what had been passing in Judea since their last visit, were they who were moved (as well they might be) with wonder and astonishment, when Jesus, so humble in his equipage, so

honoured in his numerous attendants, appeared within the city gates ; and every one asks his neighbour, ‘ Who is this ? It was replied by some of the natives of Judea,—but, as I conceive, by none of the disciples ; for any of them at this time would have given another answer,—it was replied, ‘ This is the Nazarene, the great Prophet from Galilee.’ Through the throng of these astonished spectators the procession passed by the public streets of Jerusalem to the temple, where immediately the sacred porticoes resound with the continued Hosannas of the multitudes. The chief Priests and Scribes are astonished and alarmed ; they request Jesus himself to silence his followers. Jesus, in the early part of his ministry, had always been cautious of any public display of personal consequence, lest the malice of his enemies should be too soon provoked, or the unadvised zeal of his friends should raise civil commotions. But now that his work on earth was finished in all but the last painful part of it ; now that he had firmly laid the foundations of God’s kingdom in the hearts of his disciples ; now that the Apostles were prepared and instructed for their office ; now that the days of vengeance on the Jewish nation were at hand, and it mattered not how soon they should incur the displeasure of the Romans their masters ;—Jesus lays aside a reserve which could be no longer useful ; and, instead of checking the zeal of his followers, he gives a new alarm to the chief Priests and Scribes, by a direct and firm assertion of his right to the honours that were so largely shown to him. ‘ If these,’ says he, ‘ were silent, the stones of this building would be endued with a voice to proclaim my titles :’ And then, as on a former occasion, he drove out the traders ; but with a higher tone of authority, calling it his own house, and saying, ‘ My house is the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.’ You have now the story, in all its circumstances, faithfully collected from the four Evangelists ; nothing exaggerated, but set in order, and perhaps somewhat illustrated by an application of old prophecies and a recollection of Jewish customs. Judge for yourselves whether this was not an advent of the Lord Jehovah, taking personal possession of his temple.” *

But it is not only in these passages that the name “Jehovah,” the appellation of the appearing Angel of the Old Testament, and other titles of Divinity, are given to Messiah ; and if Jesus be Messiah, then are they his titles, and as truly mark his Divinity.

“ The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord,” (Jehovah,) “ make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain shall be made low ; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain, and the glory of the Lord ” (Jehovah) “ shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.” This being spoken of him of whom John the Baptist was to be the forerunner, and the application having been afterwards expressly made by the Baptist to our Lord, it is evident that he is the Person “ to whom the Prophet attributes the incommunicable name of Jehovah, and styles him ‘ our God.’ ” *

“ Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and shall bring forth a Son ; and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us.” Here another prediction of Isaiah is expressly applied to Jesus. “ Thou shalt bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus ; and he shall be great, and the Lord God shall give to him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever and ever ; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” These are the words of the Angel to Mary, and obviously apply to our Lord the words of Isaiah : “ Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, to order and establish it for ever.” It is unnecessary, at present, to quote more of those numerous passages which speak of the future Messiah under divine titles, and which are

* Wogan.

applied to Jesus as that Messiah actually manifested. They do not in so many words connect the Angel of Jehovah with Jesus as the same Person ; but, taken with the passages above adduced, they present evidence of a weighty character in favour of that position. A plurality of Persons in the one Godhead is mentioned in the Jewish Scriptures ; this plurality is restricted to three ; one of them appears as “ the acting God ” of the patriarchal and Mosaic age ; the Prophets speak of a divine Person to come as the Messiah, bearing precisely the same titles : No one supposes this to be the Holy Ghost ; it cannot be the Father, seeing that Messiah is God’s Servant and God’s Messenger ; and the only conclusion is, that the Messiah predicted is he who is known under the titles, “ Angel,” “ Son of God,” “ Word of God,” in the Old Testament : And if Jesus be that Messiah, he is that “ Son,” that “ Word,” that “ Servant,” that “ Messenger ;” and, bearing the same divine characters as the Angel of Jehovah, is that Angel himself, and is entitled in the Christian church to all the homage and worship which was paid to him in the Jewish.

There are, however, a few passages that, in a still more distinct manner than any which have been introduced, except that from the prophecy of Jeremiah, identify Jesus Christ with the Angel of Jehovah in the patriarchal and Levitical dispensations ; and a brief consideration of them will leave this important point completely established.

Let it then be recollected, that he who dwelt in the Jewish tabernacle, between the cherubim, was “ the Angel Jehovah.” In Psalm lxxviii., which was written on the removal of the ark to Mount Zion, he is expressly addressed. “ This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in.” And again : “ They have seen thy goings, O God my King, in thy sanctuary.” But the Apostle Paul, in Ephesians iv. 8, applies this psalm to Christ, and considers this very ascent of the Angel Jehovah to Mount Zion as a prophetic type of the ascent of Jesus to the celestial Zion. “ Wherefore he saith, When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive,” &c. The conclusion, therefore, is, that the Angel Jehovah who is addressed in the

psalm, and Christ, are the same Person. This is marked with equal strength in verse 29. The psalm, let it be observed, is determined by apostolical authority to be a prophecy of Christ, as, indeed, its terms intimate; and, with reference to the future conquests of Messiah, the Prophet exclaims, "Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall Kings bring presents unto thee." The future Christ is spoken of as one having then a temple at Jerusalem.

It was the glory of the Angel Jehovah, the resident God of the temple, which Isaiah saw in the vision recorded in the sixth chapter of his prophecy before adduced; but the Evangelist John expressly declares that, on that occasion, the Prophet saw the glory of Christ, and spake of him. Christ, therefore, was the Lord of Hosts, whose glory filled the temple.

St. Peter calls the Spirit of Jehovah, by which the Prophets "prophesied of the grace that should come, the Spirit of Christ." He also informs us, that "Christ was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing." Now whatever may be the full meaning of this difficult passage, Christ is clearly represented as preaching by his Spirit in the days of Noah, that is, inspiring Noah to preach. Let this be collated with the declaration of Jehovah before the flood: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he is flesh, yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years;" during which period of delay and long-suffering, Noah was made by Him, from whom alone inspiration can come, a Preacher of righteousness; and it is clear, that Christ, and the appearing Jehovah of the antediluvian world, are supposed by St. Peter to have been the same Person. In the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews, Moses is said to have esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; a passage of easy interpretation, when it is admitted that the Jehovah of the Israelites, whose name and worship Moses professed, and Christ, were the same Person. For this worship

he was reproached by the Egyptians, who preferred their own idolatry, and treated, as all apostates do, the true religion, the pure worship of former ages from which they had departed, with contempt. "To be reproached for the sake of Jehovah," and "to be reproached for Christ," were convertible phrases with the Apostle; because he considered Jehovah and Christ to be the same Person.

"In St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, we read, 'Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them (that is, the Jews in the wilderness) also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents.' (1 Cor. x. 9.) The pronoun 'him,' *αὐτον*, must be understood after 'tempted,' and it is found in some MSS., though not sufficiently numerous to warrant its insertion in the text. It is, however, necessarily implied, and refers to Christ just before mentioned. The Jews in the wilderness here are said to have tempted some Person; and to understand by that Person any other than Christ, who is just before named, is against all grammar, which never allows without absolute necessity any other accusative to be understood by the verb than that of some person or thing before mentioned in the same sentence. The conjunction *καί*, 'also,' establishes this interpretation beyond doubt: 'Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted,'—tempted whom? The answer clearly is,—as they also tempted Christ. If Christ, then, was the Person whom the Israelites tempted in the wilderness, he unavoidably becomes the Jehovah of the Old Testament."*

This is rendered the more striking, when the passage to which the Apostle refers is given at length: "Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God, as ye tempted him in Massah." Now what could lead the Apostle to substitute "Christ," in the place of "the Lord your God?" "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted" Christ; for that is the accusative which must be supplied. Nothing, certainly, but that the idea was familiar to him,—that Christ, and the Angel

* Holden's Testimonies. See this text, so fatal to the Socinian scheme, triumphantly established against the liberty of their criticisms, in Dr. Magee's Postscript to Appendix, page 211, &c.

Jehovah, who conducted and governed the Israelites, were the same Person.

“See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth, but now he hath promised,” &c. (Heb. xii. 25, 26.)

This passage also is decisive as a proof that the Angel of Jehovah, and our Lord, are the same Person. “Him that speaketh from heaven,” the context determines to be Christ; “him that spake on earth” is, probably, Moses. The “voice” that then “shook the earth” was the voice of Him that gave the law, at the sound of which the mountain trembled and shook. Him who gave the law we have already proved, from the authority of Scripture, to have been the Angel of Jehovah; and the Apostle declares that the same Person now speaks to us “from heaven,” in the Gospel, and is, therefore, the Lord Christ. Dr. Macknight says, that it was not the Son’s voice which shook the earth, because it was not the Son who gave the law. In this he is clearly contradicted by St. Stephen, and the whole Jewish history. The protomartyr, in his defence, expressly says, that it was “the Angel” who spake with Moses in the mount; and here the Apostle Paul declares, that it was the voice of Christ which then shook the earth. Nothing can more certainly prove, than this collation of scriptures, that the Son gave the law; and that “the Angel” who spake to Moses, and Christ, are the same Person.

The above passage, in its necessary grammatical construction, so certainly marks out Christ as the Person whose voice shook the earth at the giving of the law, that the Socinians in their New Version of the Testament, have chosen to get rid of a testimony which no criticism could evade, by daringly and wilfully corrupting the text itself; and, without any authority whatever, they read, instead of, “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh,” “See that ye refuse not God that speaketh;” thus introducing a new antecedent. This instance of a wilful perversion of the very text of the word of God, has received its merited reprobation from those eminent critics who have

exposed the dishonesties, the ignorance, and the licentious criticisms of what is called an "Improved Version" of the New Testament.

These views are confirmed by the testimonies of the early Fathers, to whom the opinions of the Apostles, on this subject,—one not at all affected by the controversies of the day,—would naturally descend. The opinions of the ancient Jews, which are also decidedly confirmatory, will be given in their proper place.

Justin Martyr has delivered his sentiments very freely upon the divine appearances. "Our Christ," he says, "conversed with Moses out of the bush, in the appearance of fire. And Moses received great strength from Christ, who spake to him in the appearance of fire." Again: "The Jews are justly reproved, for imagining that the Father of all things spake to Moses, when indeed it was the Son of God, who is called the 'Angel' and the 'Messenger' of the Father. He formerly appeared in the form of fire, and without a human shape, to Moses and the other Prophets; but now, being made a man of the virgin," &c.

Irenæus says: "The Scripture is full of the Son of God's appearing; sometimes, to talk and eat with Abraham; at other times, to instruct Noah about the measures of the ark; at another time, to seek Adam; at another time, to bring down judgment upon Sodom; then again, to direct Jacob in the way; and again, to converse with Moses out of the bush."

Tertullian says: "It was the Son who judged men from the beginning, destroying that lofty tower, and confounding their languages, punishing the whole world with a flood of waters, and raining fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah, the Lord pouring it down from the Lord: For he always descended to hold converse with men, from Adam even to the Patriarchs and Prophets, in visions, in dreams, in mirrors, in dark sentences, always preparing his way from the beginning: Neither was it possible, that the God who conversed with men upon earth could be any other than that Word which was to be made flesh."

Clemens Alexandrinus says: "The Pedagogus appeared to

Abraham, to Jacob, wrestled with him, and lastly manifested himself to Moses." Again: "Christ gave the world the law of nature, and the written law of Moses. Wherefore, the Lord, deriving from one fountain both the first and second precepts which he gave, neither overlooked those who were before the law, so as to leave them without law, nor suffered those who minded not the philosophy of the barbarians to do as they pleased. He gave to the one precepts, to the other philosophy, and concluded them in unbelief till his coming, when, whosoever believes not is without excuse."

Origen says: "My Lord Jesus Christ descended to the earth more than once. He came down to Esaias, to Moses, and to every one of the Prophets." Again: "That our blessed Saviour did sometimes become as an angel, we may be induced to believe, if we consider the appearances and speeches of angels, who in some texts have said, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac,' &c.

Theophilus of Antioch also declares, "that it was the Son of God who appeared to Adam immediately after the fall, who, assuming the person of the Father and the Lord of all, came in paradise under the person of God, and conversed with Adam."

The Synod of Antioch say: "The Son is sometimes called 'an Angel,' and sometimes 'the Lord,' sometimes 'God.' For it is impious to imagine, that the God of the universe is any where called 'an Angel.' But the Messenger of the Father is the Son, who himself is Lord and God; for it is written, 'The Angel of the great council.'"

Cyprian observes, that "the Angel who appeared to the Patriarch is Christ and God." And this he confirms by producing a number of those passages from the Old Testament, where it is said, that an Angel of the Lord appeared and spake in the name of God.

Hilary speaks to the same purpose: "He who is called the 'Angel' of God, the same is Lord and God. For the Son of God, according to the Prophet, is 'the Angel of the great council.' That the distinction of Persons might be entire, he is called 'the Angel of God;' for he who is God of God, the

same also is the Angel (or Messenger) of God ; and yet, at the same time, that due honour might be paid, he is also called ‘ Lord and God.’ ”

St. Basil says : “ Who then is it, that is called both an Angel and God ? Is it not he whose name, we are told, is called ‘ the Angel of the great covenant ? ’ For though it was in after-times that he became ‘ the Angel of the great covenant,’ yet, even before that, he did not disdain the title of an Angel, or Messenger.” Again : “ It is manifest to every one, that where the same Person is styled both an Angel and God ; it must be meant of the Only-begotten, who manifests himself to mankind in different generations, and declares the will of the Father to his saints. Wherefore, he who, at his appearing to Moses, called himself ‘ I am,’ cannot be conceived to be any other person than God, the Word who was in the beginning with God.”

Other authorities may be seen in Waterland’s *Defence of Queries*, that decidedly refutes Dr. Samuel Clarke ; who pretends, in order to cover his Arianism, that the fathers represent the angel as speaking in the person of the Father.

Two objections to this doctrine, taken from the Scriptures, are answered without difficulty. “ God, who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.” To those only who deny the manifestation and agency of the Father in every case in the Old Testament, this passage presents a difficulty. God the Father is certainly meant by the Apostle, and he is said to have spoken by the Prophets. But this is no difficulty to those who, though they contend that the ordinary appearances of the Deity were those of the Son, yet allow the occasional manifestation of the Father. He is the fountain of inspiration. The Son is sent by the Father, but the Spirit is sent by the Father and by the Son. This is the order in the New Testament, and also, as many passages show, in the Old. The Spirit sent by the Father qualified the Prophets to speak unto “ our fathers.” The Apostle, however, says nothing more than that there was an agency of the Father in sending the Prophets, which does not exclude that of the Son also ; for the opposition lies in the outward

visible and standing means of conveying the knowledge of the will of God to men, which under the law was by mere men, though Prophets; under the Gospel, by the incarnate Son. Communication by Prophets, under the law, did not exclude other communications by the Son in his divine character; and communication by the Son, under the Gospel, does not exclude other communications by Apostles, Evangelists, and Christian Prophets. The text is not, therefore, an exclusive proposition either way. It is not clear, indeed, that any direct opposition at all is intended in the text, but a simple declaration of the equal authority of both dispensations, and the peculiar glory of the latter, whose human minister and revealer was the Son of God in our nature.

The second objection rests upon a passage in the same Epistle: "If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord?" To understand this passage, it is to be noted, that the Apostle refers to the judicial law of Moses, which had its prescribed penalty for every "transgression and disobedience." Now this law was not, like the Decalogue, spoken by God himself, but by angels. For after the voice of God had spoken the ten commandments, the people entreated that God would not speak to them any more. Accordingly, Moses says, "These words," the Decalogue, "the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, with a great voice; and he added no more: And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me." (Deut. v. 22.) The rest, "both the judicial and the ceremonial law, was delivered, and the covenant was made, by the mediation of Moses; and therefore the Apostle says, 'The law was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.' (Gal. iii. 19.) Hence it is called 'the law of Moses;' and the character given of it in the Pentateuch is this,—'These are the statutes, and judgments, and laws, which the Lord made between him and the children of Israel in Mount Sinai, by the hand of Moses.'"*

Nor does the Apostle's argument respect the Author of the law, (for no one can suppose that angels were its authors,) nor the Giver of the law, (for angels have no such authority,) but the medium through which it was communicated, or "spoken." In the case of the Decalogue, that medium was the Lord, the Angel Jehovah himself in majesty; but in the body of judicial and ceremonial laws, to which he clearly refers, angels and Moses. The visible medium by which the Gospel was communicated, was the Son of God made flesh. That word was "spoken by the Lord," not only in his personal, but in his mediatorial, character; and, by that wonderful condescension, its importance, and the danger of neglecting it, were marked in the most eminent and impressive manner.

It has now, therefore, been established, that the Angel Jehovah, and Jesus Christ our Lord, are the same Person; and this is the first great argument by which his Divinity is established. He not only existed before his incarnation, but is seen at the head of the religious institutions of his own church, up to the earliest ages. We trace the manifestations of the same Person from Adam to Abraham; from Abraham to Moses; from Moses to the Prophets; from the Prophets to Jesus. Under every manifestation he has appeared in the form of God, never thinking it robbery to be equal with God. "Dressed in the appropriate robes of God's state, wearing God's crown, and wielding God's sceptre," he has ever received divine homage and honour. No name is given to the Angel Jehovah, which is not given to Jehovah Jesus; no attribute is ascribed to the one which is not ascribed to the other; the worship which was paid to the one by Patriarchs and Prophets, was paid to the other by Evangelists and Apostles; and the Scriptures declare them to be the same august Person; the image of the Invisible, whom no man can see and live; the redeeming Angel, the redeeming Kinsman, and the redeeming God.

That the titles with which our Lord is invested are unequivocal declarations of absolute Divinity, will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

The Titles of Christ.

VARIOUS proofs were adduced, in the last chapter, that the visible Jehovah of the Old Testament is to be regarded as a Being distinct from the Father, yet having divine titles ascribed to him, being arrayed with divine attributes, and performing divine works equal to his. That this august Being was the same who afterwards appeared as “the Christ,” in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, was also proved; and the conclusion of that branch of the argument was, that Jesus Christ is, in an absolute sense, a divine Person, and, as such, is to be received and adored.

It is difficult to conceive any point more satisfactorily established in the Scriptures than the personal appearance of our Lord, during the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, under a divine character; but this argument, so far from having exhausted the proof of his Godhead, is only another in that series of rising steps by which we are, at length, conducted to the most unequivocal and ample demonstration of this great and fundamental doctrine.

The next argument is stated at the head of this chapter. If the titles given to Christ are such as can designate a divine Being, and a divine Being only, then is he, to whom they are by inspired authority ascribed, divine; or, otherwise, the word of truth must stand charged with practising a direct deception upon mankind, and that in a fundamental article of religion. This is our argument, and we proceed to the illustration.

The first of these titles which calls for our attention is that of “Jehovah.” Whether the Angel Jehovah were the future Christ or not, does not affect this case. Even Socinians acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah; and, if this is one of the titles of the promised Messiah, it is, consequently, a

title of our Lord, and must be ascribed to him by all who believe Jesus to be the Messiah.

So many instances of this were given, in the preceding chapter, that it is unnecessary to repeat them; and, indeed, the fact, that the name "Jehovah" is applied to the Messiah in many passages of the Old Testament, is admitted by the manner in which the argument, deduced from this fact, is objected to by our opponents. "The Jewish Cabbalists," says Dr. Priestley, "might easily admit that the Messiah might be called 'Jehovah,' without supposing that he was any thing more than a man, who had no existence before his birth." "Several things in the Scriptures are called by the name of Jehovah; as Jerusalem is called 'Jehovah our Righteousness.'"^{*} They are not, however, the Jewish interpreters only who give the name "Jehovah" to Messiah; they are also the inspired Prophets themselves, in passages which, by the equally inspired Evangelists and Apostles, are applied to Jesus. No instance can be given in which any being, acknowledged by all to be a created being, is called "Jehovah" in the Scriptures, or was so called among the Jews. The peculiar sacredness attached to this name among them was a sufficient guard against such an application of it in their common language; and as for the Scriptures, they explicitly represent it as peculiar to Divinity itself. "I am Jehovah, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another." "I am Jehovah, and there is none else, there is no God besides me." "Thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the Most High, above all the earth." The peculiarity of the name is often strongly stated by Jewish commentators; which sufficiently refutes Dr. Priestley, who affirms that they could not, on that account, conclude the Messiah to be more than a man. Kimchi paraphrases Isaiah xlii. 8, "Jehovah, that is my name,"—"that name is proper to me." On Hosea xii. 5, "Jehovah his memorial," he says, "In the name El and Elohim, he communicates with others; but, in this name, he communicates with none." Aben-Ezra, on Exodus iii. 14, proves, at length, that this name is proper to God.[†]

^{*} History of Early Opinions.

[†] Hoornbeck, *Socin. Confut.*

It is, surely, a miserable pretence to allege, that this name is sometimes given to places. It is so ; but only in composition with some other word, and not surely as indicative of any quality in the places themselves, but as memorials of the acts and goodness of Jehovah himself, as manifested in those localities. So *Jehovah-Jireh*, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen," or "The Lord will see or provide," referred to his interposition to save Isaac, and, probably, to the provision of the future sacrifice of Christ. The same observation may be made as to *Jehovah Nissi*, *Jehovah Shallum*, &c. They are names descriptive not of places, but of events, connected with them, which marked the interposition and character of God himself. It is an unsettled point among critics, whether *Jah*, which is sometimes found in composition as a proper name of man, (as *Abijah*, "Jehovah is my father," *Adonijah*, "Jehovah is my lord,") be an abbreviation of Jehovah or not ; so that the case will afford no ground of argument. But if it were, it would avail nothing ; for it is found only in a combined form, and evidently relates, not to the persons who bore these names, as a descriptive appellation, but to some connexion which existed, or was supposed to exist, between them and the Jehovah they acknowledged as their God. The cases would have been parallel, had our Lord been called *Abijah*, "Jehovah is my father," or *Jedediah*, "the beloved of Jehovah." Nothing, in that case, would have been furnished, so far as mere name was concerned, to distinguish him from his countrymen bearing the same appellatives ; but he is called "Jehovah" himself, a name which the Scriptures give to no person whatever except to each of the sacred Three who stand forth, in the pages of the Old and New Testaments, crowned with this supreme honour and eminence.

Nor is it true that, in Jeremiah xxxiii. 16, Jerusalem is called "Jehovah our Righteousness." The parallel passage in the same book (xxiii. 5, 6) sufficiently shows that this is not the name of Jerusalem, but the name of "the Branch." Much criticism has been bestowed upon these passages to establish the point, whether the clause ought to be rendered, "And this is the name by which the Lord shall call him, Our

Righteousness ;” or, “ This is the name by which he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness ;” which last has, I think, been decisively established : But he would be a very exceptionable critic who should conclude either of them to be an appellative, not of Messiah, but of Jerusalem, contrary both to the scope of the passage and to the literal rendering of the words,—words capable of somewhat different constructions, but in no case capable of being applied either to the people of Judah, or to the city of Jerusalem.

The force of the argument from the application of the name “ Jehovah ” to Messiah may be thus stated :—

Whatever belongs to Messiah, that may and must be attributed to Jesus, as being the true and only Christ ; and, accordingly, we have seen, that the Evangelists and Apostles apply those passages to our Lord, in which the Messiah is unequivocally called “ Jehovah.” But this is the peculiar and appropriate name of God ; that name by which he is distinguished from all other beings, and which imports perfections so high and appropriate to the only living and true God, such as self-existence and eternity, that it can, in truth, be a descriptive appellation of no other being. It is, however, solemnly and repeatedly given to the Messiah ; and, unless we can suppose Scripture to contradict itself, by making that a peculiar name which is not peculiar to him, and to establish an inducement to that idolatry which it so sternly condemns, and an excuse for it, then this adorable name itself declares the absolute Divinity of him who is invested with it, and is to him, as well as to the Father, a name of revelation, a name descriptive of the attributes which can pertain only to essential Godhead.

This conclusion is corroborated by the constant use of the title “ Lord ” as an appellation of Jesus, the Messiah, when manifest in the flesh. His disciples not only applied to him those passages of the Old Testament in which the Messias is called “ Jehovah,” but salute and worship him by a title which is of precisely the same original import, and which is, therefore, to be considered, in many places of the Septuagint and the New Testament, an exact translation of the august name

“Jehovah,” and fully equivalent to it in its import.* It is allowed, that it is also used as the translation of other names of God, which import simply dominion; and that it is applied also to merely human masters and rulers. It is not, therefore, like the “Jehovah” of the Old Testament, an incommunicable name; but, in its highest sense, it is universally allowed to belong to God; and if, in this highest sense, it is applied to Christ, then is the argument valid, that, in the sacred writers, whether used to express the self and independent existence of him who bears it, or that dominion which, from its nature and circumstances, must be divine, it contains a notation of true and absolute Divinity.

The first proof of this is, that, both in the Septuagint and by the writers of the New Testament, it is the term by which the name “Jehovah” is translated. The Socinians have a fiction, that *Κυριος* properly answers to *Adonai*, because the Jews were wont, in reading, to substitute that name in place of “Jehovah.” But this is sufficiently answered by Bishop Pearson, who observes, that “it is not probable that the LXX should think *Κυριος* to be the proper interpretation of יהוה, and yet give it to *Jehovah*, only in place of *Adonai*; for if they had, it would have followed, that, when *Adonai* and *Jehovah* had met in one sentence, they would not have put another word for *Adonai*, and placed *Κυριος* for *Jehovah*, to which, of itself, according to their observation, it did not belong.” “The reason also of the assertion is most uncertain; for, though it be confessed that the Masoreths did read *Adonai* when they found *Jehovah*, and Josephus before them expresses the sense of the Jews of his age, that the τετραγραμματον was not to be pronounced, and before him Philo speaks as much, yet it followeth not from thence that the Jews were so superstitious above three hundred years before; which must be proved before we can be assured that the LXX read *Adonai* for *Jehovah*, and for that reason

* Bishop Pearson, on the second article of the Creed, thus concludes a learned note on the etymology of *Κυριος*, “Lord:” “From all which it undeniably appeareth, that the ancient signification of *κυρω* is the same with *εμι*, or *υπαρχω*, *sum*, ‘I am.’”

translated it *Kypios*.”* The supposition is, however, wholly overturned by several passages, in which such an interchange of the names could not be made in the original, without manifestly depriving them of all meaning, and which absurdity could not, therefore, take place in a translation, and be thus made permanent. It is sufficient to instance Exodus vi. 2, 3, “I am the Lord :” (Jehovah :) “I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them.” This, it is true, is rather an obscure passage ; but, whatever may be its interpretation, this is clear, that a substitution of *Adonai* for *Jehovah* would deprive it of all meaning whatever, and yet, here the LXX translate Jehovah by *Kypios*.

Kypios, “Lord,” is, then, the word into which the Greek of the Septuagint renders the name “Jehovah ;” and, in all passages in which Messiah is called by that peculiar title of Divinity, we have the authority of this version to apply it, in its full and highest signification, to Jesus Christ, who is himself that Messiah. For this reason, and also because, as men inspired, they were directed to fit and proper terms, the writers of the New Testament apply this appellation to their Master, when they quote these prophetic passages as fulfilled in him. They found it used in the Greek version of the Old Testament, in its highest possible import, as a rendering of Jehovah. Had they thought Jesus less than God, they ought to have avoided, and must have avoided, giving to him a title which would mislead their readers ; or else have intimated, that they did not use it in its highest sense as a title of Divinity, but in its very lowest as a term of merely human courtesy, or, at best, of human dominion. But we have no such intimation ; and, if they wrote under the inspiration of the Spirit of Truth, it follows, that they used it as being understood to be fully equivalent to the title “Jehovah” itself. This will be shown by their quotations :—The Evangelist Matthew (iii. 3) quotes and applies to Christ the celebrated prophecy of Isaiah (xl. 3) : “For this is he that was

* Discourses on the Creed.

spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." The other Evangelists make the same application of it, representing John as the herald of Jesus, the "Jehovah" of the Prophet, and their *Kυριος*. It was, therefore, in the highest possible sense that they used the term, because they used it as fully equivalent to Jehovah. So again, in Luke i. 16, 17: "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God, and he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias." "Him" unquestionably refers to "the Lord their God;" and we have here a proof that Christ bears that eminent title of Divinity, so frequent in the Old Testament, "the Lord God," *Jehovah Aleim*; and also that *Kυριος* answered, in the view of an inspired writer, to the name "Jehovah." On this point the Apostle Paul also adds his testimony: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved;" (Romans x. 13;) which is quoted from Joel ii. 32, "Whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be delivered." Other passages might be added, but the argument does not rest upon their number; these are so explicit that they are amply sufficient to establish the important conclusion, that, in whatever senses the term "Lord" may be used, and though the writers of the New Testament, like ourselves, use it occasionally in a lower sense, yet they use it also in its highest possible sense and in its loftiest signification when they intend it to be understood as equivalent to Jehovah; and, in that sense, they apply it to Christ.

But, even when the title "Lord" is not employed to render the name "Jehovah," in passages quoted from the Old Testament, but is used as the common appellation of Christ, after his resurrection, the disciples so connect it with other terms, and with circumstances which so clearly imply Divinity, that it cannot reasonably be made a question but that they themselves considered it as a divine title, and intended that it should be so understood by their readers. In that sense they applied it to the Father; and it is clear, that they did not use it in a lower sense when they gave it to the Son. It is put

absolutely, and by way of eminence, “the Lord.” It is joined with “God;” so in the passage above quoted from St. Luke, where Christ is called “the Lord God;” and when Thomas, in an act of adoration, calls him, “My Lord and my God.” When it is used to express dominion, that dominion is represented as absolute and universal, and, therefore, divine. “He is Lord of all.” “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” “Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They shall perish; but thou remainest: And they all shall wax old, as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.”

Thus, then, the titles of “Jehovah” and “Lord” both prove the Divinity of our Saviour; “for,” as it is remarked by Dr. Waterland, “if Jehovah signify the eternal, immutable God, it is manifest that the name is incommunicable, since there is but one God; and, if the name be incommunicable, then Jehovah can signify nothing but that one God, to whom, and to whom only, it is applied. And if both these parts be true, and if it be true, likewise, that this name is applied to Christ, the consequence is irresistible, that Christ is the same one God, not the same Person, with the Father, to whom also the name ‘Jehovah’ is attributed, but the same substance, the same being, in a word, the same Jehovah, thus revealed to be more Persons than one.”

“God.” That this title is attributed to Christ, is too obvious to be wholly denied, though some of the passages which have been alleged as instances of this application of the term have been controverted. Even in this a great point is gained. Jesus Christ is called “God:” This the adversaries of his Divinity are obliged to confess; and this confession admits, that the letter of Scripture is, therefore, in favour of orthodox opinions. It is, indeed, said, that the term “God,” like the term “Lord,” is used in an inferior sense: But nothing is gained by this; nothing is, on that account, proved against the Deity of Christ; for it must still be allowed, that it is a term used in Scripture to express the divine nature, and that it

is so used generally. The question, therefore, is only limited to this, whether our Lord is called "God," in the highest sense of that appellation. This might, indeed, be argued from those passages in the Old Testament in which the title is given to the acting, manifested Jehovah, "the Lord God" of the Old Testament; but, this having been anticipated, I confine myself chiefly to the Evangelists and Apostles.

Before that proof is adduced, which will most unequivocally show that Jesus Christ is called "God," in the highest sense of that term, it will, however, be necessary to show that, in its highest sense, it involves the notion of absolute Divinity. This has been denied. Sir Isaac Newton, who, on theological subjects, as Bishop Horsley observes, "went out like a common man," says that the word "God" "is a relative term, and has a regard to servants; it is true, it denotes a Being eternal, infinite, and absolutely perfect; but a Being, however eternal, infinite, and absolutely perfect, without dominion, would not be God."* This relative notion of the term, as itself importing strictly nothing more than dominion, was adopted by Dr. S. Clarke, and made use of to support his semi-Arianism; and it seems to have been thought, that, by confining the term to express mere sovereignty, the force of all those passages of Scripture in which Christ is called God, and from which his absolute Divinity is argued, might be avoided. His words are: "The word Θεός, 'God,' has in Scripture, and in all books of morality and religion, a relative signification, and not, as in metaphysical books, an absolute one: As is evident from the relative terms which, in moral writings, may always be joined with it. For instance: In the same manner as we say, 'my father,' 'my King,' and the like; so it is proper also to say, 'my God,' 'the God of Israel,' 'the God of the universe,' and the like. Which words are expressive of dominion and government. But, in the metaphysical way, it cannot be said, 'my Infinite Substance,' 'the Infinite Substance of Israel,' or the like."

To this Dr. Waterland's reply is an ample confutation:

* *Philos. Nat. Math. in calce.*

“ I shall only observe here, by the way, that the word ‘star’ is a relative word, for the same reason with that which the Doctor gives for the other. For ‘the star of your god Remphan’ (Acts vii. 43) is a proper expression ; but, in the metaphysical way, it cannot be said, ‘the luminous substance of your god Remphan.’ So again ‘water’ is a relative word ; for it is proper to say, ‘the water of Israel ;’ but, in the metaphysical way, it cannot be said, ‘the fluid substance of Israel.’ The expression is improper.* By parity of reason, we may make relative words almost as many as we please. But to proceed : I maintain that dominion is not the full import of the word ‘God’ in Scripture ; that it is but a part of the idea, and a small part too ; and that if any person be called ‘God,’ merely on account of dominion, he is called so by way of figure and resemblance only ; and is not properly God, according to the Scripture notion of it. We may call any one a King, who lives free and independent, subject to no man’s will. He is a King so far, or in some respects ; though in many other respects, nothing like one ; and, therefore, not properly a King. If, by the same figure of speech, by way of allusion and resemblance, any thing be called God, because resembling God in one or more particulars, we are not to conclude that it is properly and truly God.

“ To enlarge something farther upon this head, and to illustrate the case by a few instances : Part of the idea which goes along with the word ‘God’ is, that his habitation is sublime, and ‘his dwelling not with flesh.’ (Dan. ii. 11.) This part of the idea is applicable to angels or to saints ; and therefore they may thus far be reputed gods, and are sometimes so styled in Scripture or ecclesiastical writings. Another part of the complex idea of God is giving orders from above, and

* It is very obvious to perceive where the impropriety of such expressions lies. The word “substance,” according to the common use of language, when used in the singular number, is supposed to be intrinsic to the thing spoken of, whose substance it is ; and, indeed, to be the thing itself. My substance is myself ; and the substance of Israel is Israel. And hence it is evinced to be improper to join substance with the relative terms, understanding it of any thing intrinsic.

publishing commands from heaven. This was, in some sense, applicable to Moses, who is therefore called a god unto Pharaoh; not as being properly a god; but instead of God, in that instance, or that resembling circumstance. In the same respect, every Prophet or Apostle, or even a Minister of a parish, might be figuratively called 'god.' Dominion goes along with the idea of God, or is a proof of it; and therefore, Kings, Princes, and Magistrates, resembling God in that respect, may, by the like figure of speech, be styled 'gods.' Not properly; for then we might as properly say, 'god David,' 'god Solomon,' or 'god Jeroboam,' as 'King David,' &c.; but by way of allusion, and in regard to some imperfect resemblance which they bear to God in some particular respects; and that is all. It belongs to God to receive worship, and sacrifice, and homage. Now, because the heathen idols so far resembled God as to be made the objects of worship, &c., therefore they also, by the same figure of speech, are by the Scripture denominated 'gods,' though, at the same time, they are declared, in a proper sense, to be no gods. The belly is called the god of the luxurious, (Phil. iii. 19,) because some are as much devoted to the service of their bellies as others are to the service of God, and because their lusts have got the dominion over them. This way of speaking is, in like manner, grounded on some imperfect resemblance, and is easily understood. The prince of the devils is supposed, by most interpreters, to be called 'the god of this world.' (2 Cor. iv. 4.) If so, the reason may be, either because the men of this world are entirely devoted to his service; or that he has got the power and dominion over them.

"Thus we see how the word 'God,' according to the popular way of speaking, has been applied to angels, or to men, or to things inanimate and insensible; because some part of the idea belonging to God has been conceived to belong to them also. To argue from hence, that any of them is properly God, is making the whole of a part, and reasoning fallaciously, *a dicto secundum quid*, as the schools speak, *ad dictum simpliciter*. If we inquire carefully into the Scripture notion of the word, we shall find, that neither dominion singly, nor

all the other instances of resemblance, make up the idea, or are sufficient to denominate any thing properly God. When the Prince of Tyre pretended to be God, (Ezek. xxviii. 2,) he thought of something more than mere dominion to make him so. He thought of strength invincible and power irresistible ; and God was pleased to convince him of his folly and vanity, not by telling him how scanty his dominion was, or how low his office ; but how weak, frail, and perishing his nature was ; that he was man only, and not God, (Ezek. xxviii. 2—9,) and should surely find so by the event. When the Lycaonians, upon the sight of a miracle wrought by St. Paul, (Acts xiv. 11,) took him and Barnabas for gods, they did not think so much of dominion, as of power and ability, beyond human : And when the Apostles answered them, they did not tell them that their dominion was only human, or that their office was not divine ; but that they had not a divine nature. They were weak, frail, and feeble men ; of like infirmities with the rest of their species, and therefore no gods.

“ If we trace the Scripture notion of what is truly and properly God, we shall find it made up of these several ideas : Infinite wisdom, power invincible, all-sufficiency, and the like. These are the ground and foundation of dominion, which is but a secondary notion, a consequence of the former ; and it must be dominion supreme, and none else, which will suit with the Scripture notion of God. It is not that of a Governor, a Ruler, a Protector, a Lord, or the like, but a sovereign Ruler, an almighty Protector, an omniscient and omnipresent Governor, an eternal, immutable, all-sufficient Creator, Preserver, and Protector. Whatever falls short of this is not properly, in the Scripture notion, God, but is only called so by way of figure, as has before been explained. Now, if you ask me why the relative terms may properly be applied to the word ‘ God,’ the reason is plain, because there is something relative in the whole idea of God, namely, the notion of Governor, Protector, &c. If you ask why they cannot so properly be applied to the word ‘ God’ in the metaphysical sense ; besides the reason before given, there is another as plain,—because metaphysics, taking in only one part of the idea, con-

sider the nature abstracted from the relation, leaving the relative part out."

To these observations may be added the argument of Dr. Randolph : *—" If God be a relative term, which has reference to subjects, it follows, that when there were no subjects there was no God ; and, consequently, either the creatures must have been some of them eternal, or there must have been a time when there was no God." The matter, however, is put beyond all doubt, by the express testimony that it is not dominion only, but excellence of nature and attributes exclusively divine, which enter into the notion of God. Thus, in Psalm xc., " Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." Here the idea of eternity is attached to the term, and he is declared to be God " from everlasting," and consequently, before any creature's existence, and so before he could have any subjects, or exercise any dominion.

The import of the title " God," in its highest sense, being thus established to include all the excellences and glories of the divine nature, on which alone such a dominion as is ascribed to God could be maintained ; if that title be found ascribed to Christ, at any period, in this its highest sense, it will prove, not, as the Arians would have it, his dominion only, but his Divinity ; and it is no answer to this at all to say, that " men are sometimes called gods in the Scripture." In the New Testament the term " God," in the singular, is never applied to any man ; and it is even a debated matter, whether it is ever a human appellation, either in the singular or the plural, in the Old Testament, the passages quoted being probably elliptical, or capable of another explanation.†

* Vindication of Christ's Divinity.

† " See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh." (Exodus vii. 1.) This seems to be explained by chapter iv. 16 : " Thou shalt be to him instead of God." " God standeth in the congregation of the mighty : " (Heb. " of God : ") " He judgeth among the gods." (Psalm lxxxii. 1.) This passage is rendered by Parkhurst, " The *Aleim* stand in the congregation of God ; in the midst the *Aleim* will judge." And on verse 6, " I have said, Ye are gods," he supposes an

But this is not important : If, in its highest sense, it is found used of Christ, it matters not to how many persons it is applied in its lower, or as a merely figurative appellation.

“ Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us.” (Matt. i. 23.) This is a portion of Scripture which the Socinians, in their “ Improved Version,” have printed in italics, as of doubtful authority, though, with the same breath, they allow that it is found in all the manuscripts and versions which are now extant. The ground, therefore, on which they have rested their objection is confessedly narrow and doubtful ; and, frail as it is, it has been entirely taken from them, and the authority of this scripture fully established.* The reason of an attempt, at once so bold and futile, to expunge this passage, and the following part of St. Matthew’s history which is connected with it, may be found in the explicitness of the testimony which it bears to our Lord’s Divinity, and which no criticism could evade. The prophecy which is quoted by the Evangelist has its difficulties ; but they do not in the least affect the argument. Whether we can explain Isaiah or not, that is, whether we can show the manner in which the prophecy had a primary accomplishment in the Prophet’s day or not, St. Matthew is sufficiently intelligible. He tells us, that the words spoken by the Prophet were spoken of Christ ; and that his miraculous conception took place, “ that,” in order that, “ they might be fulfilled ;” a mode of expression so strong, that even those who allow the Prophets to be quoted sometimes by way of accommodation by the writers of the New Testament, except this instance, as having manifestly, from the terms used, the form of an argument,

ellipsis of *Caph*, “ I have said, Ye are *as* gods.” As this is spoken of Judges, who were professedly God’s vicegerents, this is a very natural ellipsis, and there appears nothing against it in the argument of our Lord, John x. 34. The term, as used in all these passages, does not so much appear to be used in a lower sense, as by figurative application and ellipsis.

▪ Vide Nares’s Remarks on the New Version.

and not of a mere allusion.* Further, says the sacred historian, “And they shall call his name Emmanuel;” that is, according to the idiom of Scripture, where any thing is said to be called what it in reality is, He shall be Emmanuel; and the interpretation is added, “God with us.”

It is, indeed, objected, that the Divinity of Christ can no more be argued from this title of Emmanuel, than the Divinity of Eli, whose name signifies “my God,” or of Elihu, which imports “my God himself;” but it is to be remarked, that by these names such individuals were commonly and constantly known among those with whom they lived. But Emmanuel was not the personal name of our Lord; he was not so called by his friends and countrymen familiarly: The personal name which he received was “Jesus,” by divine direction; and by this he was known to the world. It follows, therefore, that “Emmanuel” was a descriptive title, a name of revelation, expressive of his divine character. It is clear, also, that in this passage he is called “God;” and two circumstances, in addition to that just mentioned, prove that the term is used in its full and highest sense. In Isaiah, from which the passage is quoted by the Evangelist, the land of Judea is called “the land of this Immanuel,” more than seven centuries before he was born: “And he,” the Assyrian, “shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck, and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.” (Isaiah viii. 8.) Thus is Christ, according to the argument in a former chapter, represented as existing before his birth in Judea, and, as the God of the Jews, the proprietor of the land of Israel. This, also, gives the true explanation of St. John’s words: “He came unto his own” nation, “and his own” people “received him not.” The second circumstance which proves the term “God,” in the title “Immanuel,” to be used in its highest sense is, that the same Person, in the following chapter of Isaiah, is

* *Formula citandi quâ Evangelista utitur, cap. i. 22, τὸ το δε ολον γεγενει ναι πληρωθη το ρηθεν, manifestè est argumentantis, non comparantis, quæ magnopere diversa est ab aliâ ejusdem Evangelistæ, et aliorum, &c.*—DATHE in Isaiah vii. 4.

called "God," with the epithet of "Mighty :"—"Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God." Thus, as Bishop Pearson observes, "First, he is *Immanu*, that is, 'with us,' for he hath dwelt among us ; and when he parted from the earth, he said to his disciples, 'I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.' Secondly : He is *El*, and that name was given him, as the same Prophet testified, 'His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God.' He, then, who is both properly called *El*, that is, 'God,' and is also really *Immanu*, that is, 'with us,' must infallibly be that Immanuel who is 'God with us ;' no inferior deity, but invested with the full and complete attributes of absolute Divinity,—'the mighty God.'"

In Luke i. 16, 17, it is said of John Baptist : "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God, and he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias." This passage has been already adduced to prove, that the title "Lord" is used of Christ in the import of Jehovah. But he is called "the Lord their God ;" and, as the term "Lord" is used in its highest sense, so must also the term "God," which proves that this title is given to our Saviour in its fullest and most extended meaning,—"to Jehovah their God," or, "to their God Jehovah," for the meaning is the same.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John i. 1.) When we come to consider the title "the Word," *Λογος*, this passage will be examined more at large. Here it is adduced to prove, that the Logos, by whom all understand Christ, is called "God" in the highest sense. 1. Because, when it is used of the Father, in the preceding clause, it must be used in its full import. 2. Because immediately to call our Lord by the same name as the Father, without any hint of its being used in a lower sense, would have been to mislead the reader on a most important question, if St. John had not regarded him as equal to the Father. 3. Because the creation is ascribed to the "Word," who is called "God :—" "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." By this, the absolute Divinity of Christ is infallibly determined,

unless we should run into the absurdity of supposing it possible for a creature to create, and not only to create all other created things but himself also. For, if Christ be not God, he is a creature; and if “not any thing that was made” was made “without him,” then he made himself.

This decided passage, as may be supposed, has been subjected to much critical scrutiny by the enemies of the faith, and many attempts have been made to resist its force. It is objected, that the Father is called $\delta \Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$, and the “Word” simply $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$, without the article. To which Bishop Middleton replies:—

“Certain critics, as is well known, have inferred from the absence of the article in this place, that $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ is here used in a subordinate sense: It has, however, been so satisfactorily answered, that, in whatever acceptation $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ is to be taken, it properly rejects the article, being here the predicate of the proposition; and Bengel instances the LXX, 1 Kings xviii. 24, $\epsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma \Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$, as similar to the present passage. It may be added, that if we had read $\delta \Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$, the proposition would have assumed the convertible form, and the meaning would have been, that whatever may be affirmed or denied of God the Father, may also be affirmed or denied of the Logos,—a position which would accord as little with the Trinitarian as with the Socinian hypotheses. It is, therefore, unreasonable to infer, that the word $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ is here used in a lower sense; for the writer could not have written $\delta \Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ without manifest absurdity.”*

In many passages, too, in which, without dispute, $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ is meant of the supreme Being, the article is not used. “With man this is impossible, but with God,” $\Theta\epsilon\omega$, “all things are possible.” (Matt. xix. 26.) “Ye cannot serve God,” $\Theta\epsilon\omega$, “and mammon.” (Luke xvi. 13.) “No man hath seen God,” $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$, “at any time.” (John i. 18.) “If this man were not of God,” $\Theta\epsilon\varsigma$, “he could do nothing.” (John ix. 33.) “By this we believe that thou camest from God,” $\Theta\epsilon\varsigma$. (John xvi. 30.) Many other instances might be given, but these amply reply to the objection.

* Doctrine of the Greek Article.

To evade the force of the argument drawn from the creation being ascribed to the Word, a circumstance which fixes his title "God" in its highest possible sense, it is alleged, that the word *γινωμαι* never signifies "to create;" and the Socinian version, therefore, renders the text, "All things were done by him;" and the translators inform us, in a note, this means, that "all things in the Christian dispensation were done by Christ, that is, by his authority." But what shall we say to this bold assertion, that *γινωμαι* is never used with reference to creative acts in the New Testament, when the following passages may be adduced in refutation? "Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world." (Heb. iv. 3.) "So that things which are seen were not made of things that do appear." (Heb. xi. 3.) "Men which are made after the similitude of God." (James iii. 9.) In all these passages, and in some places of the Septuagint also, that very word is used which, they tell us, never expresses, in Scripture, the notion of creation. Even the same chapter, verse 10, gives an instance of the same use of the word: "He was in the world, and the world was made," *εγενετο*, "by him." For this, of course, they have a criticism; but the manner in which this passage, so directly in refutation of their assertion, is disposed of in their Improved Version, is a striking confirmation of the entire impossibility of accommodating Scripture to their system. "The world was made by him," says the Evangelist. "The world was enlightened by him," say the Socinian translators, without the slightest authority, and in entire contradiction to the scope of the passage. Why did they not render the word as in the preceding verse, "The world was done by him?" which, in point of fact, makes no difference in the sense, when rightly considered. The doing, ascribed to the eternal Word, is of a specific character,—doing in the sense of "framing," "making," or "creating," *παντα*, "all things."

The Socinians have not, however, fully satisfied themselves with this notable criticism in their Improved Version; and some of them, therefore, render, "All things were made by him," "All things were made for him." But these criticisms

cannot stand together. If the verb *γινομαι* is to be deprived of the import of "creation," then it is impossible to retain the rendering of "all things were made for him," since his own acts of ordering the Christian dispensation and "enlightening" the world could not be "for him," but must have been done "by him." If, on the contrary, they will have it that all things were done "for him," then *γινομαι* must be allowed to import "creation," or their production by the omnipotence of God. Both criticisms they cannot hold, and thus they confess that one destroys the other. Their rendering of *δι' αυτου* cannot, however, be supported; for *δια*, with a genitive, denotes, not the final, but the efficient, cause.* The introduction to St. John's Gospel may, therefore, be considered as an inexpugnable proof that Deity, in its highest, and in no secondary or subordinate, sense is ascribed to our Saviour, under his title "God,"—"and the Word was God." Nor in any other than the highest sense of the term "God" can the confession of Thomas be understood: "And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God." (John xx. 28.) The Socinian version, in its note on this passage, intimates that it may be considered not as a confession, but as an exclamation, "My Lord and my God!" thereby choosing to put profane, or, at least vulgar, language into the mouth of this Apostle, of which degradation we have certainly no example in the narration of the Evangelists. Michaëlis has justly observed that, if Thomas had spoken German, (he might have added English, French, or Italian,) it might have been contended, with some plausibility, that, "My Lord and my God!" was only an irreverent ejaculation; but, that Jewish astonishment was thus expressed, is wholly without proof or support. Add to this, that the words are introduced with, *ειπεν αυτω*, "he said to him," that is, to Christ; a mere ejaculation, such as that here supposed, is rather an appeal to Heaven. Our Saviour's reply makes it absolutely certain, that

* So *δια* is used throughout St. John's Gospel; and in Hebrews ii. 10, it is said of the Father, *Δι' ου τα παντα*, "By whom are all things." So also, Romans xi. 36, "Of him, and through him," *δι' αυτου*, "and to him are all things."

the words of Thomas, though they are in the form of exclamation, amount to a confession of faith, and were equivalent to a direct assertion of our Saviour's Divinity. Christ commends Thomas's acknowledgment, whilst he condemns the tardiness with which it is made ; but to what did this acknowledgment amount ? That Christ was Lord and God.*

In Titus ii. 13, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," our Lord is not only called "God," but the "great God ;" this marks the sense in which the term is used by the Apostle, and gives unequivocal evidence of his opinions on the subject of Christ's Divinity. Socinian and Arian interpreters tell us, that "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" are two persons, and, therefore, refer the title "great God" to the Father. The Socinian version accordingly renders the text, "The glorious appearance of the great God and of our Saviour Jesus Christ." To this interpretation there are satisfactory answers. Dr. Whitby observes :—

"Here it deserveth to be noted, that it is highly probable that Jesus Christ is styled 'the great God,'—1. Because, in the original, the article is prefixed only before 'the great God,' and, therefore, seems to require this construction, 'The appearance of Jesus Christ, the great God and our Saviour.' 2. Because, as God the Father is not said properly to appear, so the word *ἐπιφάνεια* never occurs in the New Testament but when it is applied to Jesus Christ and to some coming of his ; the places in which it is to be found being only these, 2 Thess. ii. 8 ; 1 Tim. vi. 14 ; 2 Tim. i. 10 ; and iv. 1, 8. 3. Because Christ is emphatically styled 'our hope,' 'the hope of glory.' (Col. i. 27 ; 1 Tim. i. 1.) And, lastly, Because, not only all the ancient commentators on the place do so interpret this text, but the ante-Nicene Fathers also ; Hippolytus, speaking of the appearance of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ ; and Clemens of Alexandria, proving Christ to be both God and man, our Creator, and the Author of all our good things, from these very words of St. Paul."†

* Bishop Middleton.

† Exposition.

Independent of the criticism which rests upon the absence of the article, it is sufficient to establish the claim of our Saviour to the title of "the great God" in this passage, that *ἐπιφανεῖα*, "the appearing," is never, in the New Testament, spoken of the Father, but of the Son only. But, since the time of this critic, the doctrine of the Greek article has undergone ample and acute investigation, and has placed new guards around this and some other passages of similar construction against the perversions of heresy. It has, by these investigations, been established, that the Greek idiom forbids *Θεὸς* and *Σωτήρ* to be understood except of the same person; and Mr. Granville Sharp, therefore, translates the text, "Expecting the blessed hope and glorious appearance of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ:" *Επιφανείαν τῆς δόξης τοῦ μεγάλου Θεοῦ καὶ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.*

"This interpretation depends upon the rule or canon brought forward into notice not many years ago by Mr. Granville Sharp. It excited a controversy, and Unitarians either treated it with ridicule, or denied its applicability to the New Testament. But after it had been shown by Dr. Wordsworth, that most of the texts to which the rule applies were understood in the way Mr. Sharp explained them, by the ancient Fathers, who must surely have known the idiom of their native tongue; and after the doctrine of the Greek article had been investigated with so much penetration and learning by Dr. Middleton, all who have paid attention to the subject have acquiesced in the canon."*

This important canon of criticism is thus stated by Dr. Middleton:—

"When two or more attributes, joined by a copulative or copulatives, are assumed of the same person or thing, before the first attributive the article is inserted, before the remaining ones it is omitted." The limitations of this rule may be seen in the learned author's work itself, with the reasons on which they rest. They are found in "names of substances, considered as substances, proper names, or names of abstract

* Holden's Testimonies.

ideas ;” and with such exceptions, and that of plurals occasionally, the rule uniformly holds.*

Another passage, in which the appellation “God” is given to Christ, in a connexion which necessarily obliges us to understand it in its highest sense, is Hebrews i. 8: “But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” The argument of the Apostle here determines the sense in which he calls Jesus, the Son, “God,” and the views he entertains of his nature. Angels and men are the only rational created beings in the universe which are mentioned by the sacred writers. The Apostle argues, that Christ is superior even to angels; that they are but ministers, he a Sovereign, seated on a throne; that they worship him, and that he receives their worship; that they are creatures, but he the Creator. “Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands;” and, full of these ideas of supreme Divinity, he applies a passage to him out of Psalm xlv., which is there addressed to the Messiah, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.”

The Socinian version renders the passage, “But to the Son he saith, God is thy throne for ever and ever;” and in this it follows Wakefield and some others.

The first reason given to support this rendering is, that $\delta \Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ is the nominative case. But the nominative, both in common and in Attic Greek, is often used for the vocative. It is so used frequently by the LXX., and by the writers of the New Testament. The vocative form, indeed, very rarely occurs in either, the nominative almost exclusively supplying its place; and in this passage it was so taken by the Greek Fathers.† The criticism is, therefore, groundless.

The second is, that as the words are addressed to Solomon

* See Bishop Middleton On the Greek Article; also remarks at the close of the Epistle to the Ephesians and the Epistle to Titus, in Dr. A. Clarke’s Commentary; Dr. Wordsworth’s Letters to Sharp; Dr. P. Smith’s Person of Christ.

† *Omnes (patres) uno consensu δ Θεος hoc in loco vocativè acceperunt, prout in Psalmis frequentè a LXX. usurpatur, et alioquì familiare est Græcis, Atticis præsertim, nominandi casum vocativè sumere.*—BISHOP BULL.

in the psalm from which they are quoted, they must be understood to declare, that God was the support of his throne. But the opinion, that the psalm was composed concerning Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter,* has no foundation, either in Scripture or in antiquity, and is, indeed, contradicted by both. On this subject Bishop Horsley remarks :—

“ The circumstances which are characteristic of the King, who is the hero of this poem, are every one of them utterly inapplicable to Solomon ; insomuch, that not one of them can be ascribed to him without contradicting the history of his reign. The hero of this poem is a warrior, who girds his sword upon his thigh ; rides in pursuit of flying foes ; makes havoc among them with his sharp arrows ; and reigns, at last, by conquest, over his vanquished enemies. Now, Solomon was no warrior ; he enjoyed a long reign of forty years of uninterrupted peace.

“ Another circumstance of distinction in the great personage celebrated in this psalm is his love of righteousness and hatred of wickedness. The original expresses, that he had set his heart upon righteousness, and bore an antipathy to wickedness. His love of righteousness and hatred of wickedness had been so much the ruling principles of his whole conduct, that for this he was advanced to a condition of the highest bliss, and endless perpetuity was promised to his kingdom. The word we render ‘righteousness,’ in its strict and proper meaning, signifies ‘justice,’ or the constant and perpetual observance of the natural distinctions of right and wrong in civil society ; and principally with respect to property in private persons, and, in a Magistrate or Sovereign, in the impartial exercise of judicial authority. But the word we render ‘wickedness,’ denotes not only ‘injustice,’ but whatever is contrary to moral purity in the indulgence of the appetites of the individual, and whatever is contrary to a principle of true piety towards God. Now, the word ‘righteousness’ being here opposed to this wickedness, must, certainly, be taken as generally as the

* This notion appears to have originated with Calvin.

word to which it is opposed in a contrary signification. It must signify, therefore, not merely 'justice,' in the sense we have explained, but purity of private manners, and piety towards God. Now, Solomon was certainly, upon the whole, a good King, nor was he without piety; but his love of righteousness, in the large sense in which we have shown the word is to be taken, and his antipathy to the contrary, fell very far short of what the Psalmist ascribes to his great King, and procured for him no such stability of his monarchy.

"Another circumstance, wholly inapplicable to Solomon, is the numerous progeny of sons, the issue of the marriage, all of whom were to be made Princes over all the earth. Solomon had but one son, that we read of, that ever came to be a King,—his son and successor Rehoboam; and so far was he from being a Prince over all the earth, that he was no sooner seated on the throne than he lost the greater part of his father's kingdom.

"For, would it be said of him, that his kingdom, which lasted only forty years, is 'eternal?' It was not even eternal in his posterity. And, with respect to his 'loving righteousness and hating wickedness,' it but ill applies to one who, in his old age, became an encourager of idolatry, through the influence of women. This psalm, therefore, is applicable only to the Christ. Farther: Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter being expressly condemned as contrary to the law, (1 Kings xi. 2,) to suppose that this psalm was composed in honour of that event, is, certainly, an ill-founded imagination. Estius informs us, that the Rabbins, in their commentaries, affirm, that Psalm xlv. was written wholly concerning the Messiah. Accordingly, they translate the title of the psalm as we do, 'A song of loves;' the LXX, Ὠδὴ ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀγαπητῆς, 'A song concerning the beloved;' Vulgate, *Pro dilecto*,—a title justly given to Messiah, whom God, by voices from heaven, declared his beloved Son. Besides, as the word *meschil*, which signifies 'for instruction,' (LXX, εἰς συνησιν; Vulgate, *ad intellectum*,) is inserted in the title, and as in the psalm no mention is made of Solomon, from an account

of whose loves, as Pierce observes, the Jewish church was not likely to gain much instruction, we are led to understand the psalm, not of Solomon, but of Messiah only."

The interpretation, "God is thy throne," is, moreover, monstrous, and derives no support from any parallel figurative or elliptical mode of expression in the sacred writings,—God, the throne of a creature! And, finally, as stated by Bishop Middleton, had that been the sense of the passage, the language requires that it should have been written *θενος σε ὁ Θεος*, not *ὁ θενος*,* which, on the Socinian interpretation, is the predicate of the proposition. So futile are all these attempts to shake the evidence which this text gives to the absolute Godhead of our Saviour.

"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." (1 John v. 20.) Here our Saviour is called "the true God, and eternal life." The means by which this testimony is evaded, is to interpret the clause, "him that is true," of the Father, and to refer the pronoun "this," not to the nearest antecedent, "his Son Jesus Christ," but to the most remote, "him that is true." All, however, that is pretended by the Socinian critics on this passage is, not that this construction must, but that it may, take place. Yet even this feeble opposition to the received rendering cannot be maintained: For, 1. To interpret the clause, "him that is true," of the Father, is entirely arbitrary; and the scope of the Epistle, which was to prove that Jesus the Christ was the true Son of God, and therefore divine, against those who denied his Divinity, and that he had "come in the flesh," in opposition to the heretics, who denied his humanity,† obliges us to

* Doctrine of the Greek Article.

† These were the Docetæ, who taught that our Lord was a man in appearance only, and suffered and died in appearance only. On the contrary, the Cerinthians and others believed that the Son of God was united to the human nature at his baptism, departed from it before his passion, and was reunited to it after his resurrection. According to the former, Christ was man in appearance only; according to the latter, he was the Son of God at the time

refer that phrase to the Son, and not to the Father. 2. If it could be established that the Father was intended by "him that is true," it would be contrary to grammatical usage to refer the pronoun "*this* is the true God, and eternal life," to the remote antecedent, without obvious and indisputable necessity.

"Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever." (Rom. ix. 5.)

With respect to this text, it is to be noted,

1. That it continues an enumeration of the particular privileges of the Jewish nation which are mentioned in the preceding verses; and the Apostle adds, "Whose are the fathers," the Patriarchs and Prophets, and of whom "the Christ came."

2. That he throws in a clause of limitation with respect to the coming of Christ, "according to the flesh;" which clearly states that it was only according to the flesh, the humanity of Christ, that he descended from the Jewish nation, and, at the same time, intimates, that he was more than flesh, or mere human nature.

3. The sentence does not end here: The Apostle adds, "who is over all, God blessed for ever;" a relative expression, which evidently refers to the antecedent "Christ;" and thus we have an antithesis, which shows the reason why the Apostle introduced the limiting clause, "according to the flesh;" and explains why Christ, in one respect, did descend from the Jews; and, in another, that this could be affirmed of him: He was "God over all," and, therefore, only "according to the flesh" could be of human descent.

4. That this completes the Apostle's purpose to magnify the privileges of his nation: After enumerating many others, he crowns the whole by declaring, that "God over all," when he became incarnate for the purpose of human salvation, took a body of the seed of Abraham.

of his passion and death in appearance only. We see, then, the reason why St. John, who writes against these errors, so often calls Christ "*Him that is true*," true God and true man, each not in appearance only.

Criticism has, of course, endeavoured, if possible, to weaken the argument drawn from this lofty and impregnable passage ; but it is of such a kind as greatly to confirm the truth. For, in the first place, various readings of manuscripts cannot here be resorted to for rendering the sense dubious, and all the ancient versions support the present reading. It has, indeed, been alleged, on the authority of Grasinus, that though the word “ God ” is found in all our present copies, it was wanting in those of Cyprian, Hilary, and Chrysostom. But this has been abundantly proved to be an error, that word being found in the manuscripts and best editions of Cyprian and Hilary, and even St. Chrysostom affords decisive testimony to the common reading ; in short, “ the word ‘ God ’ in this text is found in every known manuscript of this Epistle, in every ancient version extant, and in every Father who has had occasion to quote the passage ; so that, in truth, there can scarcely be instanced a text in the New Testament, in which all the ancient authorities more satisfactorily agree.”* The only method of dealing with this passage left to Arians and Socinians was, therefore, to attempt to obtain a different sense from it by shifting the punctuation. By this device some read, “ And of whom is the Christ, according to the flesh. God, who is over all, be blessed for ever.” Others, “ And of whom is the Christ, according to the flesh, who is over all. Blessed be God for ever.” A critic of their own, Mr. Wakefield, whose authority they acknowledge to be very great, may, however, here be turned against them. Both those constructions, he acknowledges, appear so awkward, so abrupt, so incoherent, that he never could be brought to relish them in the least degree ;† and Dr. S. Clarke, who was well disposed to evade this decisive passage, acknowledges that the common reading is the most obvious. But, independent of the authority of critics, there are several direct and fatal objections to this altered punctuation. It leaves the limiting clause, “ according to the flesh,” wholly unaccounted for, as, on the Socinian scheme, no possible reason can be given for that limitation.

* Magee On Atonement. See also Nares On the New Version.

† Inquiry into Opinions

If the Apostle had regarded Christ simply as a man, he could have come in no other way than "according to the flesh;" nor is this relieved at all by rendering the phrase, as in their "Improved Version," by "natural descent," for a mere man could only appear among men by "natural descent." Either, therefore, the clause is a totally unmeaning and an impertinent parenthesis, or it has respect to the natural antithesis which follows,—his supreme Divinity, as "God over all." Thus the scope of this passage prohibits this license of punctuation. To the latter clause being considered as a doxology to God the Father, there is an insuperable critical difficulty. Dr. Middleton observes,—

"It has been deemed a safer expedient to attempt a construction different from the received one, by making the whole or part of the clause to be merely a doxology in praise of the Father, so that the rendering will be either, 'God, who is over all, be blessed for ever,' or, beginning at Θεός, 'God be blessed for ever.' These interpretations, also, have their difficulties; for thus εὐλογητός will properly want the article. On the first, however, of these constructions, it is to be observed, that in all the doxologies, both of the LXX, and of the New Testament, in which εὐλογητός is used, it is placed at the beginning of the sentence: In the New Testament there are five instances, all conspiring to prove this usage, and in the LXX about forty. The same arrangement is observed in the formula of cursing, in which ἐπικαταρατός always precedes the mention of the person cursed. The reading then would, on this construction, rather have been, Εὐλογητός ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων Θεός εἰς τὰς αἰώνας. Against the other supposed doxology, the objection is still stronger, since that would require us not only to transpose εὐλογητός, but to read 'Ο Θεός. Accordingly, in all instances where a doxology is meant, we find, Εὐλογητός ὁ Θεός." *

Whitby also remarks:—

"The words will not admit of that interpunction and interpretation of Erasmus, which will do any service to the Arians or Socinians, namely, that a colon must be put after the words

* Doctrine of the Greek Article.

κατα σαρκα, ‘after the flesh ;’ and the words following must be an *ecphonema*, and grateful exclamation for the blessings conferred upon the Jews : Thus, ‘God, who is over all, be blessed for ever !’ For this exposition is so harsh, and without any like example in the whole New Testament, that, as none of the orthodox ever thought upon it, so I find not that it ever came into the head of any Arian. Socinus himself rejects it, for this very good reason,—that Θεος ευλογητος, ‘God be blessed,’ is an unusual and unnatural construction ; for, wherever else these words signify ‘blessed be God,’ ευλογητος is put before God, as Luke i. 68 ; 2 Cor. i. 3 ; Eph. i. 3 ; 1 Peter i. 3 ; and Θεος hath an article prefixed to it ; nor are they ever immediately joined together otherwise. The phrase occurs twenty times in the Old Testament, but in every place ευλογητος goes before, and the article is annexed to the word ‘God ;’ which is a demonstration that this is a perversion of the sense of the Apostle’s words.”

The critical discussion of this text is further pursued by the writers just quoted ; by Dr. Nares, in his Remarks ; Mr. Wardlaw, in his Discourses ; Archbishop Magee, and others ; and we may confidently say of it, with Doddridge, that it is “a memorable text, and contains a proof of Christ’s proper Deity which the opposers of that doctrine have never been able, nor will ever be able, to answer.” So it was considered and quoted “by the Fathers,” says Whitby, “from the beginning ; and” continues the same commentator, “if these words are spoken by the Spirit of God concerning Christ, the arguments hence to prove him truly and properly God are invincible ; for, first, ὁ Θεος ἐπὶ πάντων, ‘God over all,’ is the periphrasis by which all the heathen philosophers did usually represent the supreme God ; and so is God the Father described both in the Old and New Testament, as ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων, ‘he that is over all.’ (Eph. iv. 6.) Secondly. This is the constant epithet and periphrasis of ‘the great God’ in the Old Testament, that he is ευλογητος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ‘God blessed for evermore ;’ (1 Chron. xvi. 36 ; Psalm xli. 13, and lxxxix. 52 ;) and also in the New, where he is styled, ‘The God,’ ὃς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ευλογητος εἰς τὰς αἰῶνας, ‘who is blessed for evermore.’”

Numerous other passages might be cited, where Christ is called "God:" These only have been selected, not merely because the proof does not rest upon the number of scriptural testimonies, but upon their explicitness; but also because they all associate the term "God," as applied to our Saviour, with other titles, or with circumstances, which demonstrate, most fully, that that term was used by the inspired penmen in its highest sense of true and proper Deity when they applied it to Christ. Thus we have seen it associated with "Jehovah;" with "Lord," the New Testament rendering of that ineffable name; with acts of creative energy, as in the introduction to the Gospel of St. John; with the supreme dominion and perpetual stability of the throne of the Son, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In the Epistle to Titus, he is called "the great God;" in the first Epistle of John, "the true God," and "the Giver of eternal life;" and in the last text examined his twofold nature is distinguished,—man, "according to the flesh," and, in his higher nature, God, "God over all, blessed for evermore." These passages stand in full refutation of both the Arian and Socinian heresies. In opposition to the latter, they prove our Saviour to be more than man, for they assert him to be God; and in opposition to the former, they prove that he is God, not in an inferior sense, but "the great God," "the true God," and "God over all, blessed for evermore."

I pass over, for the sake of greater brevity, other titles more rarely ascribed to our Saviour,—such as, "the Lord of glory," (1 Cor. ii. 8,) "King of kings, and Lord of lords,"—on which it would be easy to argue, that their import falls nothing short of absolute Divinity. A few remarks on three other titles of our Lord, of more frequent occurrence, may close this branch of the argument. These are, "King of Israel;" "Son of God;" and "the Word." The first bears evident allusion to the pre-existence of Christ, and to his sovereignty over Israel under the law. Now, it has been already established, that the Jehovah, "the King of the Jews," "the Holy One of Israel our King," "the King the Lord of Hosts," of the Old Testament, is not the Father, but another divine Person,

who, in the New Testament, is affirmed to have been Jesus Christ. This being the view of the sacred writers of the evangelical dispensation, it is clear that they could not use the appellation, "The King of Israel," in a lower sense than that in which it stands in the Old Testament; and there, indisputably, even by the confession of opponents, it is collocated with titles, and attributes, and works, which unequivocally mark a divine character. It is with clear reference to this his peculiar property in the Jewish people that St. John says, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not;" a declaration which is scarcely sense, if Judea was his own country* in no higher a meaning than that in which it was the country of any other person who happened to be born there; for it is, surely, a strange method of expressing the simple fact that he was born a Jew, (were nothing more intended,) to say that he came into his own country, for this every person does at his birth, wherever he is born. Nor is it any aggravation of the guilt of the Jews, that they rejected merely a countryman; since that circumstance gave him no greater claim than that of any other Jew to be received as the Messiah. The force of the remark lies in this, that, whereas the Prophets had declared that "the King of Israel," "the Lord of Hosts," "Jehovah," should become incarnate, and visit his own people; and that Jesus had given sufficient evidence that he was that predicted and expected Personage; yet the Jews, "his own people and inheritance," rejected him. The same notion is conveyed in our Lord's parable, when the Jews are made to say, "This is the heir;" he in whom the right is vested; "let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours."†

It is sufficient, however, here to show, that the title "King of Israel" was understood, by Jews, to imply Divinity.

* "He came into his own country, and his countrymen received him not."
—CAPPE'S *Version*.

† *Venit ad sua, et sui non receperunt eum, id est, venit ad possessionem suam, et qui possessionis ipsius erant eum non receperunt; quod explicatur, Matt. xxi., ubi filius dicitur missus ad Ecclesiam Judaicam ως κληρονομος εις την κληρονομίαν αυτου.*—LUDOV. DE DIEU, *in loc.*

Nathanael exclaims, " Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel." This was said upon such a proof of his Messiahship as, from his acquaintance with some matter private to Nathanael alone when he was " under the fig tree," was a full demonstration of omniscience ; a circumstance which also determines the divine import of " Son of God," the title that is here connected with it. Both were certainly understood by Nathanael to imply an assumption of Godhead.

" ' As our Saviour hung upon the cross,' says St. Matthew, ' they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief Priests mocking him, with the Scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: For he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.' [One of them saying, ' If thou be Christ, save thyself and us;,' but the other said unto Jesus, ' Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom.'] [' And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, and saying, If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself. '] Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, [Certainly this was a righteous man,] Truly this was the Son of God.' Here we see the Jews, and the Gentiles resident among them, uniting to speak in a language that stamps Divinity upon the title used by them both. The Jewish passengers, upon the road over the top of Calvary, stood still near the cross of our Saviour, insultingly to nod at him, to reproach him with his assumed appellative of ' the Son of God,' and to challenge him to an exertion of that Divinity which both he and they affixed to it, by coming down from the cross, and saving himself from death. The elders, the Scribes, and the Chief Priests, equally insulted him with the same assumption, and equally challenged him to the same

exertion, calling upon him now to show he was truly the King of Israel, or the Lord and Sovereign of their nation in all ages, by putting forth the power of his divine royalty, and coming down from the cross.”*

Such is the testimony of the Jews to the sense in which our Saviour applied these titles to himself. The title “Son of God” demands, however, a larger consideration, various attempts having been made to restrain its significance, in direct opposition to this testimony, to the mere humanity of our Saviour, and to rest its application upon his miraculous conception.

It is true, that this notion is held by some who hesitate not to acknowledge, that Jesus Christ is a divine Person ; but, by denying his Deity as “the Son of God,” they both depart from the faith of the church of Christ in the earliest times, and give up to the Socinians the whole argument for the Divinity of Christ which is founded upon that eminent appellation. On this account, so frequent and, indeed, so general a title of our Lord deserves to be more particularly considered, that the foundation which it lays for the demonstration of the Divinity of Christ may not be unthinkingly relinquished ; and that a door of error, which has been unconsciously opened by the vague reasonings of men, in other respects orthodox, may be closed by the authority of holy writ.

That the title “Son of God” was applied to Christ, is a fact. His disciples, occasionally before and frequently after his resurrection, give him this appellation ; he assumes it himself ; and it was indignantly denied to him by the Jews, who, by that very denial, acknowledge that it was claimed in its highest sense by him, and by his disciples for him. The question therefore is, what this title imported.

Those who think that it was assumed by Christ, and given to him by his disciples, because of his miraculous conception, are obviously in error. Our Lord, when he adopts the appellation, never urges his miraculous birth as a proof of his Sonship. On the contrary, this is a subject on which he preserves a total silence, and the Jews were left to consider him as “the son of Joseph ;” and to argue from his being

* Whitaker’s Origin of Arianism.

born at "Nazareth," as they supposed, that he could not be the Messiah : So ignorant were they of the circumstances of his birth, and therefore of the manner of his conception.

Again : Our Lord calls God his "Father," and grounds the proof of it upon his miracles. The Jews, too, clearly conceived, that, in making this profession of Sonship with reference to God, he assumed a divine character, and made himself "equal with God." They therefore took up stones to stone him. In that important argument between our Lord and the Jews, in which his great object was to establish the point, that, in a peculiar sense, God was his Father, there is no reference at all to the miraculous conception. On the contrary, the title "Son of God" is assumed by Christ on a ground totally different ; and it is disputed by the Jews, not by their questioning or denying the fact that he was miraculously conceived, but on the assumed impossibility that he, being a man, should be equal to God, which they affirmed that title to import.

Nor did the disciples themselves give him this title with reference to his conception by the Holy Ghost. Certain it is that Nathanael did not know the circumstances of his birth ; for he was announced to him by Philip as Jesus of Nazareth, "the Son of Joseph ;" and he asks, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth ?" He did not know, therefore, but that Jesus was the son of Joseph ; he knew nothing of his being born at Bethlehem, and yet he confesses him to be "the Son of God, and the King of Israel."

It may also be observed, that, in the celebrated confession of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," there is no reference at all to the miraculous conception ; a fact at that time, probably, not known even to the Apostles, and one of the things which Mary kept and pondered in her heart, till the Spirit was given, and the full revelation of Christ was made to the Apostles. But, even if the miraculous conception were known to St. Peter, it is clear, from the answer of our Lord to him, that it formed no part of the ground on which he confessed "the Son of Man" to be "the Son of God ;" for our Lord replies, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona ; for flesh

and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." He had been specially taught this doctrine of the Sonship of Christ by God; an unnecessary thing, certainly, if the miraculous conception had been the only ground of that Sonship; for the evidence of that fact might have been collected from Christ and the virgin mother, and there was no apparent necessity of a revelation from the Father so particular, a teaching so special, as that mentioned in our Lord's reply, and which is given as an instance of the peculiar "blessedness" of Simon Bar-jona.

This ground, therefore, not being tenable, it has been urged, that "Son of God" was simply an appellation of Messiah, and was so used among the Jews; in other words, that it is an official designation, and not a personal one. Against this, however, the evangelic history affords decisive proof. That the Messiah was to be the Jehovah of the Old Testament, is plain from the texts adduced in a former chapter; and this, therefore, is to be considered the faith of the ancient Jewish church. It is, however, certain, that, at the period of our Lord's advent, and for many years previously, the learned among the Jews had mingled much of the philosophy which they had learned from the heathen schools with their theological speculations; and that their writings present often a singular compound of crude metaphysical notions, allegories, cabbalistic mysteries, and, occasionally, great and sublime truths. The age of our Lord was an age of great religious corruption and error. The Sadducees were materialists and sceptics; and the Pharisees had long cultivated the opinion, that the Messiah was to be a temporal Monarch,—a notion which served to vitiate their conceptions of his character and office, and to darken all the prophecies. Two things, however, amidst all this confusion of opinions, and this prevalence of great errors, appear exceedingly clear from the Evangelists: 1. That the Jews recognised the existence of such a Being as "the Son of God;" and that, for any person to profess to be the Son of God, in this peculiar sense, was to commit blasphemy. 2. That for a person to profess to be the Messiah simply, was not considered blasphemy, and did not exasperate the Jews to take up stones to stone the

offender. Our Lord certainly professed to be the Messiah; many of the Jews also, at different times, believed on him as such; and yet, as appears from St. John's Gospel, these same Jews, who believed on him as Messiah, were not only offended, but took up stones to stone him as a blasphemer, when he declared himself to be the Son of God, and that God was his proper Father. It follows from these facts, that the Jews of our Lord's time, generally, having been perverted from the faith of their ancestors, did not expect the second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God, the divine *Memra*, or *Logos*, to be the Messiah. Others, indeed, had a dim and uninfluent apprehension of this truth; there were who indulged various other speculations on the subject; but the true doctrine was only retained among the faithful few, as Simeon, who explicitly ascribes Divinity to the Messiah, whom he held in his arms; Nathanael, who connects "Son of God" and "King of Israel" together,—one the designation of the divine nature, the other of the office of Messiah; and the Apostles of our Lord, whose minds were gradually opened to this mystery of faith, and brought off from the vulgar notion of the civil character and mere human nature and human work of Messiah, by the inspiration and teaching of God; "flesh and blood did not reveal it to them, but the Father."

We cannot, therefore, account for the use of the title "Son of God" among the Jews of our Lord's time, whether by his disciples or his enemies, by considering it as synonymous with "Messiah." The Jews regarded the former as necessarily involving a claim to Divinity, but not the latter; and the disciples did not conceive that they fully confessed their Master, by calling him the Messiah, without adding to it his higher personal designation. "Thou art the Christ," says St. Peter; but he adds, "the Son of the living God;" just as Nathanael, under the influence of a recent proof of his omniscience, and, consequently, of his Divinity, salutes him, first, as "Son of God," and then, as Messiah, "King of Israel."

We are to seek for the origin of the title "the Son of God" in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, where a "divine Son" is spoken of, in passages, some of which have reference to him

as Messiah also, and in others which have no such reference. In both, however, we shall find that it was a personal designation,—a name of revelation, not of office ; that it was essential in him to be a Son, and accidental only that he was the Messiah ; that he was the first by nature, the second by appointment ; and that, in constant association with the name of “ Son,” as given to him alone, and in a sense which shuts out all creatures, however exalted, are found ideas and circumstances of full and absolute Divinity.

Under the designation “ Son,” Son of God, he is introduced in the second psalm : “ The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten thee.” From apostolic authority we know, that the “ Son,” here introduced as speaking, is Christ ; this application to him being explicitly made at least twice in the New Testament. Now, if we should allow, with some, that “ the day ” here spoken of is the day of Christ’s resurrection, and should interpret his being begotten of the Father of the act itself of raising him from the dead, it is clear, that the miraculous conception of Christ is not, in this passage, laid down as the ground of his Sonship. The reference is clearly made to another transaction, namely, his resurrection. So far this passage, thus interpreted, furnishes an instance in which the Messiah is called “ the Son of God,” on some ground entirely independent of the mode of his incarnation. But he is so frequently called “ the Son,” where there is no reference even to his resurrection, that this cannot be considered as the ground of that relation ; and, indeed, the point is sufficiently settled by St. Paul, who, in his Epistle to the Romans, tells us, that the resurrection of Christ was the declaration of his Sonship, not the ground of it,—“ declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead.” We perceive, too, from the psalm, that the mind of the inspired writer is filled with ideas of his Divinity, of his claims, and of his works as God. This Son the nations of the earth are called to “ kiss, lest he be angry, and they perish from the way ; ” and every one is pronounced “ blessed ” who “ putteth his trust in him ; ” a declaration of unequivocal Divinity, because found in a book which pronounces every

man cursed “who trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.”

“It is obvious, at first view, that the high titles and honours ascribed in this psalm to the extraordinary Person who is the chief subject of it, far transcend any thing that is ascribed in Scripture to any mere creature : But if the psalm be inquired into more narrowly, and compared with parallel prophecies ; if it be duly considered, that not only is the extraordinary Person here spoken of called ‘the Son of God,’ but that this title is so ascribed to him as to imply that it belongs to him in a manner that is absolutely singular, and peculiar to himself, seeing he is said to be ‘begotten of God,’ and is called, by way of eminence, ‘the Son ;’ (verse 12 ;) that the danger of provoking him to anger is spoken of in so very different a manner from what the Scripture uses in speaking of the anger of any mere creature,—‘Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little ;’ that when the Kings and Judges of the earth are commanded to serve God with fear, they are, at the same time, commanded to ‘kiss the Son,’ which, in those times and places, was frequently an expression of adoration ; and particularly, that, whereas other scriptures contain awful and just threatenings against those who trust in any mere man, the Psalmist expressly calls them ‘blessed’ who trust in the Son here spoken of : All these things taken together, and compared with the other prophecies, make up a character of Divinity ; as, on the other hand, when it is said that God would set this his Son as his King on his holy hill of Zion, (verse 6,) these and various other expressions in this psalm contain characters of the subordination which was to be appropriated to that divine Person who was to be incarnate.”*

Neither the miraculous conception of Christ, nor yet his resurrection from the dead, is, therefore, the foundation of his being called “the Son of God” in this psalm. Not the first, for there is no allusion to it ; not the second, for he was declared from heaven to be the “beloved Son” of the Father,

* Maclaurin’s Essay on the Prophecies.

at his very entrance upon his ministry, and, consequently, before the resurrection; and also, because the very Apostle who applies the prediction to the resurrection of Christ, explicitly states, that even that was a declaration of an antecedent Sonship. It is also to be noted, that, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, St. Paul institutes an argument upon this very passage in the second psalm, to prove the superiority of Christ to the angels: "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" "The force of this argument lies in the expression 'begotten,' importing that the Person addressed is the Son of God, not by creation, but by generation. Christ's pre-eminence over the angels is here stated to consist in this, that, whereas they were created, he is begotten; and the Apostle's reasoning is fallacious unless this expression intimates a proper and peculiar filiation."* "He hath obtained," says Bishop Hall, "a more excellent name than the angels, namely, to be called and to be the Son of God, not by grace and adoption, but by nature and communication of essence." This argument, from Christ's superiority to all creatures, even the most exalted, shows the sentiment of St. Paul as to Divinity being implied in the title "Son," given to the Messiah in the second psalm. In this, several of the ancient Jewish commentators agree with him; and here we see one of the sources from which the Jews derived their notion of the existence of a divine Son of God.

Though the above argument stands independent of the interpretations which have been given to the clause, "This day have I begotten thee," the following passage from Witsius, in some parts of its argument, has great weight:—

"But we cannot so easily concede to our adversaries, that, by the generation of Christ, mentioned in the second psalm, his resurrection from the dead is intended, and that, by 'this day,' we are to understand the day on which God, having raised him from the dead, appointed him the King of his

* Holden's Testimonies.—*Non dicit Deus, Adoptavi, sed, Generavi te: Quod communicationem ejusdem essentiae et naturae divinae significat, modo tamen prorsus ineffabili.*—MICHAELIS.

church. For, 1. 'To beget,' signifies nowhere in the sacred volume 'to rescue from death;' and we are not at liberty to coin new significations of words. 2. Though, possibly, it were used in that metaphorical acceptation, (which, however, is not yet proved,) it cannot be understood in this passage in any other than its proper sense. It is here adduced as a reason for which Christ is called 'the Son of God.' Now, Christ is the Son of God, not figuratively, but properly; for the Father is called his proper Father, and he himself is denominated the proper Son of the Father; by which designation he is distinguished from those who are his sons in a metaphorical sense. 3. These words are spoken to Christ with a certain emphasis, with which they would not have been addressed to any of the angels, much less to any of mankind; but if they meant nothing more than the raising of him from the dead, they would attribute nothing to Christ which he doth not possess in common with many others, who, in like manner, are raised up, by the power of God, to glory and an everlasting kingdom. 4. Christ raised himself from the dead, too, by his own power; from which it would follow, according to this interpretation, that he begat himself, and that he is his own son. 5. It is not true, in fine, that Christ was not begotten of the Father, nor called his Son, till that very day on which he was raised from the dead; for, as is abundantly manifest from the Gospel history, he often, when yet alive, professed himself the Son of God, and was often acknowledged as such. 6. 'To-day' refers to time, when human concerns are in question; but this expression, when applied to divine things, must be understood in a sense suitable to the majesty of the Godhead. And, if any word may be transferred from time to denote eternity, which is the complete and perfect possession, at once, of an interminable life, what can be better adapted to express its unsuccessive duration than the term 'to-day?'

"Nor can our adversaries derive any support to their cause from the words of Paul: 'And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us, their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second psalm,

Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' (Acts xiii. 32, 33.) For, 1. Paul doth not here prove the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, from this expression in the second psalm, (which, though it describes him who is raised again, doth not prove his resurrection,) but from Isaiah iv. 3, and Psalm xvi. 10; while he adds, 'And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead,' &c. (Verses 34 and 35.) 2. The words 'raised up Jesus,' do not even relate to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, but to the exhibition of him as a Saviour. This raising of him up is expressly distinguished from the raising of him again from the dead, which is subsequently spoken of, verse 34. The meaning is, that God fulfilled the promise made to the fathers, when he exhibited Christ to mankind in the flesh. But what was that promise? This appears from the second psalm, where God promises to the church, that, in due time, he would anoint, as King over her, his own Son, begotten of himself to-day; that is, from eternity to eternity, for with God there is a perpetual to-day. Grotius, whose name is not offensive to our opposers, has remarked, that Luke makes use of the same word to signify 'exhibiting,' in Acts ii. 30; iii. 26. To these we add another instance from chap. vii. 37: 'A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you.' 3. Were we to admit, that the words of the psalm are applied to the resurrection of Christ, which seemed proper to Calvin, Cameron, and several other Protestant Divines, the sense will only be this, that, by his being thus raised up again, it was declared and demonstrated, that Christ is the Son of the Father, begotten of him from everlasting. The Jewish Council condemned him for blasphemy, because he had called himself 'the Son of God.' But, by raising him again from the grave, after he had been put to death as a blasphemer, God acquitted him from that charge, and publicly recognised him as his only-begotten Son. Thus he was declared, exhibited, and distinguished as the Son of God with power, expressly and particularly, to the entire exclusion of all others. The original word here employed by the Apostle is remarkably expressive; and, as Ludovicus de Dieu has learnedly observed, it signifies that Christ was placed

betwixt such bounds, and so separated and discriminated from others, that he neither should nor can be judged to be any one else than the Son of God. The expression, ‘with power,’ may be joined with ‘declared ;’ and then the meaning will be, that he was shown to be the Son of God by a powerful argument. Or it may be connected with the ‘Son of God ;’ and then it will intimate that he is the Son of God in the most ample and exalted sense of which the term is susceptible ; so that this name, when ascribed to him, is ‘a more excellent name’ than any that is given to the noblest of creatures.”*

Solomon, in Proverbs viii. 22, introduces not the personified, but the personal, Wisdom of God, under the same relation of a Son, and in that relation ascribes to him divine attributes. This was another source of the notion which obtained among the ancient Jews, that there was a divine Son of God :—

“Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of his way,
Before his works of old.
I was anointed from everlasting,
From the beginning, before the world was,
When there were no depths, I was born,” &c.†

Here, “from considering the excellence of wisdom, the transition is easy to the undefiled Source of it. Abstract wisdom now disappears, and the inspired writer proceeds to the delineation of a divine Being, who is portrayed in colours of such splendour and majesty as can be attributed to no other than the eternal Son of God.”‡ “‘Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of his way.’ The Father possessed the Son ; had, or, as it were, acquired, him by an eternal generation. To say of the attribute ‘wisdom,’ that God ‘possessed it in the beginning of his work of creation,’ is trifling ; certainly it is too futile an observation to fall from any sensible writer ; how, then, can it be attributed to the wise Monarch of

* Witsius’s *Dissertations on the Creed*.

† Holden’s *Translation of Proverbs*. In the notes to chapter viii. the application of this description of Wisdom to Christ is ably and learnedly defended.

‡ *Ibid*.

Israel?"* "‘I was anointed from everlasting.’ Can it, with propriety, be said of an attribute, that it was ‘anointed, invested with power and authority, ‘from everlasting?’ In what way, literal or figurative, can the expression be predicated of a quality? But it is strictly applicable to the divine Logos, who was anointed by the effusion of the Spirit; who was invested with power and dignity from everlasting; and who, from all eternity, derived his existence and essence from the Father; for in him ‘dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.’"†

It is a confirmation of the application of Solomon’s description of Wisdom to the second Person of the Trinity, that the ancient Jewish writers, (Philo among the number,) as Allix has shown,‡ speak of the generation of Wisdom, and by that term mean “the Word,” a personal appellation so familiar to them. Nor is there any thing out of the common course of the thinking of the ancient Hebrews in these passages of Solomon when applied to the personal Wisdom; since he, as we have seen, must, like them, have been well enough acquainted with a distinction of Persons in the Trinity, and knew Jehovah, their Lawgiver and King, under the title of “the Word of the Lord,” as the Maker of all things, and the Revealer of his will, in a word, as divine, and yet distinct from the Father. The relation in the Godhead of Father and Son was not, therefore, to the Jews an unrevealed mystery, and sufficiently accounts for the ideas of Divinity which they, in the days of Christ, connected with the appellation “Son of God.”

This relation is most unequivocally expressed in the prophecy of Micah, “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting;” (Micah v. 2;) or, as it is in the margin, “from the days of eternity.”||

* Holden’s Translation of Proverbs.

† Ibid.

‡ Judgment of the Jewish Church.

|| So the LXX, and the Vulgate, and the critics generally. *Antiquissima erit origine, ab æternis temporibus.*—DATHÉ. *Imò a diebus æternitatis, id est, priusquam natus fuerit, jam ab æterno extitit.*—ROSENMULLER.

Here the Person spoken of is said to have had a twofold birth, or "going forth."* By a natural birth he came forth from Bethlehem of Judah; by another and a higher, he was from the days of eternity. One is opposed to the other; but the last is carried into eternity itself by words which most clearly intimate an existence prior to the birth in Bethlehem, and that an eternal one; whilst the term used, and translated his "goings forth," conveys precisely the same idea as the eternal generation of the Son of God. "The passage carefully distinguishes his human nature from his eternal generation. The Prophet describes him who was to 'come out of Bethlehem' by another more eminent coming or going forth, even from all eternity. This is so signal a description of the divine generation, before all time, or of that 'going forth' of Christ from everlasting, the eternal Son of God; 'God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds;' who was afterwards in time made man, and born into the world in Bethlehem; that the prophecy evidently belongs to him, and could never be verified of any other."†

This text, indeed, so decidedly indicates that peculiar notion of the Divinity of our Lord which is marked by the term and the relation of "Son," that it is not surprising that Socinians should resort to the utmost violence of criticism to escape its powerful evidence. Dr. Priestley, therefore, says, "that it may be understood concerning the promises of God, in which the coming of Christ was signified to mankind from the beginning of the world." But nothing can be more forced or unsupported. The word here employed never signifies the work

* The word נָסַח, "to come forth," is used in reference to birth frequently, as Genesis xvii. 6; 2 Kings xx. 18; and so the Pharisees understood it, when referring to this passage, in answer to Herod's inquiry, where Christ should be "born." The plural form, his "goings forth" from eternity, denotes eminency. To signify the perfection and excellency of that generation, the word for "birth" is expressed plurally; for it is a common Hebraism to denote the eminency or continuation of a thing or action by the plural number. God shall judge the world "in righteousness and equity," or "most righteously and equitably." (Psalm cxviii. 9.) "The angels of the Lord." (Lam. iv. 16, &c.)

† Dr. Pocock.

of God in predicting future events ; but is often used to express natural birth and origin. So it is unquestionably used in the preceding clause, and cannot be supposed to be taken in a different sense, much less in an unique sense, in that which follows, and especially, when a clear antithesis is marked and intended. He was to be born in time ; but was not, on that account, merely a man ; he was “from the days of eternity.” By his natural birth, or “going forth,” he was from Bethlehem ; but his “goings forth,” his production, his heavenly birth or generation, was from “everlasting ;” for so the Hebrew word means, though, like our own word “ever,” it is sometimes accommodated to temporal duration. Its proper sense is that of “eternity,” and it is used in passages which speak of the infinite duration of God himself.

Others refer “his goings forth from everlasting” to the purpose of God that he should come into the world ; but this is too absurd to need refutation ; no such strange form of speech as this would be, if taken in this sense, occurs in the Scriptures ; and it would be mere trifling so solemnly to affirm that of Messiah which is just as true of any other person born into the world. This passage must, then, stand as an irrefutable proof of the faith of the ancient Jewish Church, both in the Divinity and the divine Sonship of Messiah ; and, as Dr. Hales well observes,* “this prophecy of Micah is, perhaps, the most important single prophecy in the Old Testament, and the most comprehensive respecting the personal character of the Messiah and his successive manifestation to the world. It crowns the whole chain of prophecies descriptive of the several limitations of the blessed Seed of the woman, to the line of Shem, to the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to the tribe of Judah, and to the royal house of David, here terminating in his birth at Bethlehem, ‘the city of David.’ It carefully distinguishes his human nativity from his eternal generation ; foretels the rejection of the Israelites and Jews for a season, their final restoration, and the universal peace destined to prevail throughout the earth in ‘the regeneration.’

* Hales’s Analysis.

It forms, therefore, the basis of the New Testament, which begins with his human birth at Bethlehem, the miraculous circumstances of which are recorded in the introductions of Matthew's and Luke's Gospels; his eternal generation, as the Oracle, or Wisdom, in the sublime introduction of John's Gospel; his prophetic character and second coming illustrated in the four Gospels and the Epistles; ending with a prediction of the speedy approach of the latter, in the Apocalypse." (Rev. xxii. 20.)

The same relation of "Son," in the full view of supreme Divinity, and where no reference appears to be had to the office and future work of Messiah, is found in Proverbs xxx. 4: "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?" Here the Deity is contemplated, not in his redeeming acts, in any respect or degree; not as providing for the recovery of a lost race, or that of the Jewish people, by the gift of his Son; he is placed before the reverend gaze of the Prophet in his acts of creative and conserving power only, managing at will and ruling the operations of nature; and yet, even in these peculiar offices of Divinity alone, he is spoken of as having a "Son," whose "name," that is, according to the Hebrew idiom, whose "nature," is as deep, mysterious, and unutterable as his own. "What is his name, and what is his Son's name, canst thou tell?"*

* Dr. A. Clarke, in his note on this text, evidently feels the difficulty of disposing of it on the theory that the term "Son" is not a divine title, and enters a sort of caveat against resorting to doubtful texts, as proofs of our Lord's Divinity. But, for all purposes for which this text has ever been adduced, it is not a doubtful one; for it expresses as clearly as possible, that God has a Son, and makes no reference to the incarnation at all; so that the words are not spoken in anticipation of that event. Those who deny the divine Sonship can never, therefore, explain that text. What follows in the note referred to is more objectionable: It hints at the obscurity of the writer as weakening his authority. Who he was, or what he was, we indeed know not; but his words stand in the book of Proverbs; a book, the inspiration of which both our Lord and his Apostles have verified, and that is enough: we need no other attestation.

The Scriptures of the Old Testament themselves in this manner furnished the Jews with the idea of a personal Son in the divine nature ; and their familiarity with it is abundantly evident, from the frequent application of the terms, " Son," " Son of God," " first and only-begotten Son," " Offspring of God," to the Logos, by Philo ; and that in passages where he must, in all fair interpretation, be understood as speaking of a personal, and not of a personified, Logos. The same terms are also found in other Jewish writers, before the Christian era.

The phrase " Son of God " was, therefore, known to the ancient Jews, and to them conveyed a very definite idea ; and it is no answer to this to say, that it was a common appellative of Messiah among their ancient writers. The question is, How came " Son of God " to be an appellative of Messiah ? " Messiah " is an official title ; " Son," a personal one. It is granted that the Messiah is the Son of God ; but it is denied that, therefore, the term " Son of God " ceases to be a personal description, and that it imports the same with Messiah. David was the " son of Jesse " and the " King of Israel ; " he, therefore, who was King of Israel was the son of Jesse ; but the latter is the personal, the former only the official, description ; and it cannot be argued, that " son of Jesse " conveys no idea distinct from " King of Israel." On the contrary, it marks his origin and his family ; for, before he was King of Israel, he was the son of Jesse. In like manner, " Son of God " marks the natural relation of Messiah to God ; and the term " Messiah," his official relation to men. The personal title cannot otherwise be explained ; and as we have seen that it was used by the Jews as one of the titles of Messiah, yet still used personally, and not officially, and, also, without any reference to the miraculous conception at all, as before proved, it follows, that it expresses a natural relation to God, subsisting not in the human but in the higher nature of Messiah ; and, this higher nature being proved to be divine, it follows, that the term " Son of God," as applied to Jesus, is, therefore, a title of absolute Divinity, importing his participation in the very nature and essence of God. The same

ideas of divine Sonship are suggested by almost every passage in which the phrase occurs in the New Testament.

“When Jesus was baptized, he went up straightway out of the water : And lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him ; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” The circumstances of this testimony are of the most solemn and impressive kind, and there can be no rational doubt but they were designed authoritatively to invest our Lord with the title “ Son of God ” in the full sense that it bears in those prophecies in which the Messiah had been introduced under this appellation, rendered still more strong and emphatic by adding the epithet “ beloved,” and the declaration, that in him the Father was well pleased. That the name “ Son of God ” is not here given to Christ with reference to his resurrection, need not be stated ; that it was not given to him, along with a declaration of the Father’s pleasure in him, because of the manner in which he had fulfilled the office of Messiah, is also obvious, for he was but just then entering upon his office and commencing his ministry ; and if, therefore, it can be proved, that it was not given to him with reference to his miraculous conception, it must follow that it was given on grounds independent of his office, and independent of the circumstances of his birth ; and that, therefore, he was in a higher nature than his human, and for a higher reason than an official one, the “ Son of God.”

Now this is, I think, very easily and conclusively proved. As soon as the Baptist John had heard this testimony, and seen this descent of the Holy Spirit upon him, he tells us that he bore record that this is the Son of God ;—the Messiah, we grant, but not the Son of God because he was the Messiah, but Son of God and Messiah also. This is clear, from the opinion of the Jews of that day, as before shown. It was to the Jews that he bore record that Jesus was the Son of God. But he used this title in the sense commonly received by his hearers. Had he simply testified that he was the Messiah, this would not to them in general have expressed the idea which all attached to the name “ Son of God,” and which they

took to involve a divine character and claim. But in this ordinary sense of the title among the Jews, John the Baptist gave his testimony to him, and by that shows in what sense he himself understood the testimony of God to the Sonship of Jesus. So, in his closing testimony to Christ, recorded in John iii., he makes an evident allusion to what took place at the baptism of our Lord, and says, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." Here the love of the Father, as declared at his baptism, is represented as love to him as the Son; and all things being given into his hands, as the consequence of his being his beloved Son. "All things" unquestionably imply all offices, all power and authority; all that is included in the offices of King, Messiah, Mediator: And it is affirmed, not that he is Son, and beloved as a Son, because of his being invested with these offices, but that he is invested with them because he was the well-beloved Son; a circumstance which fully demonstrates that "Son of God" is not an official title, and that it is not of the same import as Messiah. To the transaction at his baptism our Lord himself adverts in John v. 37: "And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me." For, as he had just mentioned the witness arising from his miraculous works, and, in addition to these, introduces the witness of the Father himself as distinct from the works, a personal testimony from the Father alone can be intended, and that personal testimony was given at his baptism. Now, the witness of the Father, on this occasion, is, that he was his beloved Son; and it is remarkable that our Lord introduces the Father's testimony to his Sonship on an occasion in which the matter in dispute with the Jews was respecting his claim to be the Son of God. The Jews denied that God was his Father in the sense in which he had declared him to be so, and "they sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath; but said also, that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." In this case, what was the conduct of our Lord? He re-affirms his Sonship even in this very objectionable sense; asserts that "the Son doeth all things whatsoever that the Father doeth;" (verse 19;

that “as the Father raiseth the dead, so the Son quickeneth whomsoever he will ;” (verse 21 ;) that “all judgment has been committed to the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father ;” (verses 22, 23 ;) that “as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself ;” (verse 26 ;) and then confirms all these high claims of equality with the Father, by adducing the Father’s own witness at his baptism : “And the Father himself hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you ; for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.”* With respect to this testimony, two critical remarks have been made, which, though not essential to the argument, further corroborate the views just taken. The one is, that in all the three Evangelists who record the testimony of the Father to Christ at his baptism, the article is prefixed both to the substantive and the adjective. Matthew iii. 17 : *Ουτος εστιν ο υιος μου ο αγαπητος*,—the most discriminating mode of expression that could be employed, as if to separate Jesus from every other who, at any time, had received the appellation of “the Son of God :” “This is that Son of mine who is the beloved.” In the second clause, “In whom I am well pleased,” the verb in all the three Evangelists is in the first

* Though the argument does not at all depend upon it, yet it may be proper to refer to Campbell’s translation of these verses, as placing some of the clauses in this passage in a clearer light : “Now the Father, who sent me, hath himself attested me. Did ye never hear his voice, or see his form ? Or, have ye forgotten his declaration, that ‘ye believe not him whom he hath commissioned ?’” On this translation, Dr. Campbell remarks, “The reader will observe, that the two clauses, which are rendered in the English Bible as declarations, are, in this version, translated as questions. The difference in the original is only in the pointing. That they ought to be so read, we need not, in my opinion, stronger evidence than that they throw much light upon the whole passage. Our Lord here refers to the testimony given at his baptism ; and when you read the two clauses as questions, all the chief circumstances attending that memorable testimony are exactly pointed out. ‘Have ye never heard his voice, *φωνη εκ των ουρανων*, nor seen his form ?’ the *σωματικον ειδος*, in which, St. Luke says, the Holy Ghost descended. ‘And have ye not his declaration abiding in you ?’ *τον λογον*, the words which were spoken at that time.”

aorist, *εν ᾧ εὐδοκῆσα*. Now, although we often render the Greek aorist by the English present, yet this can be done with propriety only when the proposition is equally true, whether it be stated in the present, in the past, or in the future time. And thus the analogy of the Greek language requires us not only to consider the name “Son of God,” as applied in a peculiar sense to Jesus, but also to refer the expression used at his baptism to that intercourse which had subsisted between the Father and the Son, before this name was announced to men.*

The epithet, “only-begotten,” which several times occurs in the New Testament, affords further proof of the Sonship of Christ in his divine nature. One of these instances only need be selected: “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” If the epithet “only-begotten” referred to Christ’s miraculous conception, then the glory “as of the only-begotten” must be a glory of the human nature of Christ only; for that alone was capable of being thus conceived. This is, however, clearly contrary to the scope of the passage, which does not speak of the glory of the nature, “the flesh,” which “the Word” assumed, but of the glory of the Word himself, who is here said to be the only-begotten of the Father. It is, therefore, the glory of his divine nature which is here intended.† Such, too, was the sense in which the primitive church and the immediate followers of the Apostles understood the title *μονογενῆς*, “Only-begotten,” or “only Son,” as Bishop Bull has shown at length,‡ and “to him and others,” says Dr.

* “‘Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,’ that is, have always been well pleased, am at present well pleased, and will continue to be well pleased.”—MACKNIGHT.

† “The glory as of the Only-begotten,” &c. “The particle *ως*, *as*, is not here a note of similitude, but of confirmation, that this Son was the only-begotten of the Father.”—WHITBY. “This particle sometimes answers to the Hebrew *ach*, and signifies *certè*, ‘truly.’”—Ibid. So Schleusner, *in voc. lū, reverà, verè*. The clause may, therefore, be properly rendered, “The glory indeed, or truly, of the Only-begotten of the Father.”

‡ *Judicium Ecclesiæ*.

Waterland, "I may refer for proof that the title 'Son of God,' or 'only-begotten Son,' in Scripture, cannot be reasonably understood either of our Lord's miraculous conception by the Holy Ghost, or of his Messiahship, or of his being the first-begotten from the dead, or of his receiving all power, and his being appointed heir of all things. None of these circumstances, singly considered, nor all together, will be sufficient to account for the title 'only Son,' or 'Only-begotten;' but it is necessary to look higher up to the pre-existent and divine nature of the Word, who was in the beginning 'with God,' and was himself very God, before the creation, and from all eternity. Angels and men have been called 'sons of God,' in an improper and metaphorical sense; but they have never been styled 'only-begotten,' nor, indeed, 'sons,' in any such distinguishing and emphatic manner as Christ is. They are sons by adoption, or faint resemblance; he is truly, properly, and eminently 'Son of God,' and, therefore, God, as every son of man is, therefore, truly man." The note in the Socinian Version tells us, that "this expression does not refer to any peculiar mode of derivation or existence; but is used to express merely a higher degree of affection, and is applied to Isaac, though Abraham had other sons." Isaac is, however, so called, because he was the only child which Abraham had by his wife Sarah; and this instance is, therefore, against them. The other passages in this Gospel, and in St. John's First Epistle, in which the term is used, give no countenance to this interpretation; and in the only other passages in the New Testament in which it occurs, it unquestionably means an "only son or child." "Behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother." (Luke vii. 12.) "For he had one only daughter." (Luke viii. 42.) "Master, look upon my son; for he is my only child." (Luke ix. 38.) Here, then, on the one hand, there is no passage in which the epithet "only-begotten" occurs, which indicates, by any other phrase or circumstance, that it has the force of "well-beloved;" whilst there are several which, from the circumstances, oblige us to interpret it literally as expressive of a peculiar relationship of the child to the parent,—an only, an only-begotten

child. This is, then, the sense in which it is used of Christ; and it must respect either his divine or human nature. Those who refer it to his human nature, consider it as founded upon his miraculous conception. It is, however, clear that that could not constitute him a Son, except as it consisted in the immediate formation of the manhood of our Lord by the power of God; but, in this respect, he was not the "only-begotten," not the "only Son," because Adam was thus also immediately produced, and for this very reason is called by St. Luke, "the son of God." Seeing, then, that *μονογενής*, "only-begotten," does not anywhere import the affection of a parent, but the peculiar relation of an only son; and that this peculiarity does not apply to the production of the mere human nature of our Lord, the first man being in this sense, and for this very reason, "a son of God," thereby excluding Christ, considered as a man, from the relation of "only Son," the epithet can only be applied to the divine nature of our Lord, in which, alone, he is at once naturally and exclusively "the Son of the living God."

All those passages, too, which declare that "all things were made by the Son," and that God "sent his Son" into the world, may be considered as declarations of a divine Sonship, because they imply that the Creator was, at the very period of creation, a Son, and that he was the Son of God when, and consequently before, he was sent into the world; and thus both will prove, that that relation is independent either of his official appointment as Messiah, or of his incarnation. The only plausible objection to this is, that "when a person is designated by a particular title, he is often said to perform actions under that title, though the designation may have been given to him subsequently." Certain acts may be said to have been done by the King, though, in fact, he performed them before his advancement to the throne; and we ascribe the "Principia" to Sir Isaac Newton, though that work was written before he received the honour of knighthood. In this manner, we are told, by those who allow the Divinity of Christ, whilst they deny his divine Sonship, that, as "Son of God" was one of the common appellations of Christ among his dis-

ciples, it was natural for them to ascribe creation, and other divine acts performed before the incarnation, to the Son, meaning merely that they were done by that same divine Person who, in consequence of his incarnation and miraculous conception, became the Son of God, and was, by his disciples, acknowledged as such.

The whole of this argument supposes that the titles, "the Son," "the Son of God," are merely human titles, and that they are applied to Christ, when considered as God, and in his pre-existent state, only in consequence of that interchange of appellations to which the circumstance of the union of two natures, divine and human, in one person, so naturally leads. Thus it is said, that the "Lord of glory" was "crucified;" that God purchased the church "with his own blood;" that "the Son of Man" was "in heaven" before the ascension. So also, in familiar style, we speak of the Divinity of Jesus, and of the Godhead of the Son of Mary. An interchange of appellations is acknowledged; but then even this supposes that some of them are designations of his divine, whilst others describe his assumed, nature; and the simple circumstance of such an interchange will no more prove the title "Son of God" to be a human designation, than it will prove "Son of Mary" to be a divine one. Further: If such an interchange of titles be thus contended for, we may then ask, Which of the titles, in strict appropriation, designate the human, and which the divine, nature of our Lord? If "Son of God" be, in strictness, a human designation, (and so it must be, if it relate not to his Divinity,) then we may say that our Saviour, as God, has no distinctive name at all in the whole Scriptures. The title "God" does not distinguish him from the other Persons of the Trinity; and "Word" stands in precisely the same predicament as "Son;" for the same kind of criticism may reduce it to merely an official appellative, given because of his being the medium of instructing men in the will of God; and it may, with equal force, be said, that he is called "the Word" in his pre-existent state only, because he, in time, became "the Word," in like manner as, in time also, he became "the Son." The other names of Christ are all official; and as in the Scrip-

tures we have no such phrase as “the second Person in the Trinity,” and other theological designations, since adopted, to express the Divinity of Christ, the denial of the title “Son” as a designation of Divinity leads to this remarkable conclusion, (remarkable, especially, when considered as coming from those who hold the Deity of Christ,) that we have not in Scripture, neither in the Old nor the New Testament, a single appellation which, in strictness and truth of speech, can be used to express the divine Person of Him who was made flesh and dwelt among us. If, then, an interchange of divine and human designations be allowed, the title “Son of God” may still be a divine description for any thing which such an interchange implies; if it is not a designation of his Divinity, we are left without a name for our Saviour as God, and considered as existing before the incarnation, and so there can properly be no interchange of divine and human titles at all.

But the notion, that the title “Son of God” is an appellation of the human nature of our Lord, applied sometimes to him, when his divine character and acts are distinctly considered, by a customary interchange of designations, is a mere assumption. There is nothing to prove it, whilst all those passages which connect the title “Son” immediately, and by way of eminence, with his Divinity, remain wholly unaccounted for on this theory, and are, therefore, contrary to it. Let a few of these be examined. It is evident, that, in a peculiar sense, he claims God as his Father, and that with no reference either to the incarnation or resurrection, or to any thing besides a relation in the divine nature. So, when he had said to the Jews, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;” the Jews so understood him to claim God for his Father as to equal himself with God: “They sought the more to kill him, because he had not only broken the Sabbath; but said also that God was his Father,” (*πατέρα ιδιον*, “his own proper Father,”) “making himself equal with God;” and, so far from correcting this as an error in his hearers, which he was bound to do by every moral consideration, if they had so greatly mistaken him, he goes on to confirm them in their opinion as to the extent of his claims, declaring, that “what things soever the

Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise ; and that as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given the Son to have life in himself." In all this, it is admitted by our Lord, that whatever he is and has is from the Father ; which is, indeed, implied in the very name and relation of " Son ;" but if this communication be not of so peculiar a kind as to imply an equality with God, a sameness of nature and perfections, there is not only an unwarrantable presumption in the words of our Lord, but, in the circumstances in which they were uttered there is an equivocation in them inconsistent with the sincerity of an honest man. This argument is confirmed by attending to a similar passage in the tenth chapter of John. Our Lord says, " They shall never perish ; my Father which gave them me is greater than I, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones to stone him." And they assign, for so doing, the very same reason which St. John has mentioned in the fifth chapter : " We stone thee for blasphemy, because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." Our Lord's answer is, " Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods ? If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the Scriptures cannot be broken," (that is, if the language of Scripture be unexceptionable,) " say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God ?" " These words are sometimes quoted in support of the opinion of those who hold that our Saviour is called ' the Son of God,' purely upon account of the commission which he received. But the force of the argument and the consistency of the discourse require us to affix a much higher meaning to that expression. Our Lord is reasoning *à fortiori*. He vindicates himself from the charge of blasphemy in calling himself ' the Son of God,' because even those who hold civil offices upon earth are called, in Scripture, ' gods.'* But, that he might not

* " This argument, which is from the less to the greater, proceeds thus : If those who, having nothing divine in them, namely, the Judges of the great Sanhedrim, to whom the Psalmist there speaks, are called ' gods' for this

appear to put himself upon a level with them, and to retract his former assertion, 'I and my Father are one,' he not only calls himself, 'Him whom the Father hath sent into the world,' which implies that he had a being, and that God was his Father, before he was sent; but he subjoins, 'If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though you believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him;' expressions which appear to be equivalent to his former assertion, 'I and the Father are one,' and which were certainly understood by the Jews in that sense, for as soon as he uttered them they sought again to take him."*

To these two eminent instances, in which our Lord claims God as his Father, in reference solely to his divine nature, and to no circumstance whatever connected with his birth or his offices, may be added his unequivocal answer, on his trial, to the direct question of the Jewish council. "Then said they all, Art thou the Son of God? and he saith unto them, Ye say that I am," that is, "I am that ye say;" thus declaring that, in the very sense in which they put the question, he was the Son of God. In confessing himself to be, in that sense, the Son of God, he did more than claim to be the Messiah; for the council judged him, for that reason, guilty of blasphemy; a charge which could not lie against any one, by the Jewish law, for professing to be the Messiah. It was, in their judgment, a case of blasphemy, explicitly provided against by their law, which inflicted death upon the offence; but, in the whole Mosaic Institute, it is not a capital crime to assume the title and character of Messiah. Why, then, did the confession of Christ, that he was the "Son of God," in answer to the interrogatory of the council, lead them to exclaim, "What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth; he is worthy of death!" "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die." The reason is given,

reason only, that they have in them a certain imperfect image of divine power and authority, how much more may I be called 'God,' 'the Son of God,' who am the natural Son of God!"—BISHOP BULL.

* Hill's Lectures.

—"because he made himself the Son of God." His blasphemy was alleged to lie in this ; this, therefore, implied an invasion of the rights and honours of the divine nature, and was, in their view, an assumption of positive Divinity. Our Lord, by his conduct, shows that they did not mistake his intention. He allows them to proceed against him without lowering his pretensions, or correcting their mistake ; which, had they really fallen into one, as to the import of the title, "Son of God," he must have done, or have been accessory to his own condemnation.*

As in none of these passages the title "Son of God" can possibly be considered as a designation of his human nature or office ; so, in the apostolic writings, we find proof of equal force that it is used even by way of opposition and contradistinction to the human and inferior nature. "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh ; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. i. 3, 4.) A very few remarks will be sufficient to point out the force of this passage. The Apostle, it is to be observed, is not speaking of what Christ is officially, but of what he is personally and essentially ; for the truth of all his official claims depends upon the truth of his personal ones ; if he be a divine Person, he is every thing else he assumes to be. He is therefore considered by the Apostle distinctly in his two natures. As a man, he was "flesh," "of the seed of David," and a son of David ; in a superior nature, he was divine, and the "Son of God." To prove that he was of the seed of David, no evidence was necessary but the Jewish genealogies ; to prove him divine, or, as the Apostle chooses to express it, "the Son of God," evidence of a higher kind was necessary, and it was given in his "resurrection from the dead." That "declared him to be the Son of God with power," or powerfully determined and marked him out to be the Son of God, a divine Person. That an

* See this argument largely and ably stated in Wilson's *Illustration of the Method of explaining the New Testament by the early Opinions of Jews and Christians concerning Christ*.

opposition is expressed between what Christ was according to the flesh, and what he was according to a higher nature, must be allowed, or there is no force in the Apostle's observation ; and equally clear it must be, that the nature, put in opposition to the fleshly nature, can be no other than the divine nature of Christ, the apostolic designation of which is the " Son of God."

This opposition between the two natures is sufficiently marked for the purpose of the argument, without taking into account the import of the phrase in the passage just quoted, "according to the Spirit of holiness;" which, by many critics, is considered as equivalent to "according to his divine nature."

Because of the opposition, stated by the Apostle, between what Christ was *κατα*, "according to," "in respect of," the flesh ; and his being declared "the Son of God with power," *κατα*, "according to," "in respect of," the Spirit of holiness ; Macknight, following many others, interprets "the Spirit of holiness" to mean the divine nature of Christ, as "the flesh" signifies his whole human nature. To this Schleusner adds his authority, *sub voce* *αγιωσυνη* : "*Summa Dei majestas et perfectio. Rom. i. 4, Κατα πνευμα αγιωσυνης. Quoad vim suam et majestatem divinam. Similiter in Vers. Alex. non solum, Heb. הוה Psalm cxlv. 4, 5, sed etiam רָפָּא רָקִי re-spondet, Psalm xcvi. 12.*"

Doddridge demurs to this, on the ground of its being unusual in Scripture to call the divine nature of Christ, "the Spirit of holiness," or the "Holy Spirit." This is, however, far from a conclusive objection : It is not so clear that there are not several instances of this in Scripture ; and certain it is, that the most ancient Fathers frequently use the terms "Spirit," and "Spirit of God," to express the divine nature of our Lord. "*Certissimum est,*" says Bishop Bull, "*Filium Dei, secundum Deitatis hypostasim in scriptis Patrum titulo Spiritus, et Spiritus Dei, et Spiritus Sancti passim insigniri.*" To this we may add the authority of many other eminent critics.*

* "We have observed so often before, that the Spirit in Christ, especially when opposed to the flesh, denotes his divine nature, that it is needless to

The whole argument of the Apostle Paul, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, is designed to prove our Lord superior to angels; and he adduces, as conclusive evidence on this point, that to none of the angels was it ever said, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son." It is therefore clear, that, on this very ground of Sonship, our Lord is argued to be superior to angels, that is, superior in nature, and in natural relation to God; for in no other way is the argument conclusive. He has his title "Son," by inheritance, that is, by natural and hereditary right. It is by inheritance that he hath obtained a "more excellent name" than angels; that is, by his being of the Father, and, therefore, by virtue of his divine filiation. Angels may be, in an inferior sense, the sons of God by creation; but they cannot inherit that title, for this plain reason, that they are created, not begotten; whilst our Lord inherits the "more excellent name" because

repeat it. Nor ought it to seem strange, that Christ, as the Son of God, and God, is here called 'the Spirit of holiness,' an appellation generally given to the third Person of the Divinity, for the same divine and spiritual nature is common to every Person of the Trinity. Hence, we have observed, that Hermas, a contemporary of St. Paul, has expressly called the divine Person of the Son of God, a Holy Spirit."—BULL. "When the term 'Spirit' refers to Christ, and is put in opposition to the flesh, it denotes his divine nature."—SCHÆTTGEN. The same view is taken of the passage by Beza, Erasmus, Cameron, Hammond, Poole, and Macknight. The note of Dr. Guyse contains a powerful reason for this interpretation: "If 'the Spirit of holiness' is here considered as expressive of the sense in which Christ is 'the Son of God,' it evidently signifies his divine nature, in opposition to what he was according to the flesh; and so the antithesis is very beautiful between *κατα πνευμα*, 'according to the Spirit,' and *κατα σαρκ*, 'according to the flesh.' But if we consider it as the principle of the power by which Christ was raised from the dead, for demonstrating him to be the Son of God, it may signify either his own divine nature, or the Holy Spirit, the third Person in the adorable Trinity; and yet, unless his own divine nature concurred in raising him from the dead, his resurrection, abstractedly considered in itself, no more proved him to be the 'Son of God,' than the resurrection of believers by the power of God, and by 'his Spirit who dwelleth in them,' (Rom. viii. 11,) prove any of them to be so." It is also in corroboration of this view that Christ represents himself as the agent of his resurrection: "I lay down my life, and I have power to take it again." "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

he is begotten, not created. "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?"* The same ideas of absolute Divinity connect themselves with the title throughout this chapter. "The Son," by whom "God in these latter days hath spoken to us," is "the brightness," the effulgence, "of his glory, and the express," or exact and perfect, "image of his person." But it is only to the divine nature of our Lord that these expressions can refer. "The brightness of his glory" is a phrase in which allusion is made to a luminous body, which is made visible by its own effulgence. The Father is compared to the original fountain of light, and the Son to the effulgence or body of rays streaming from it. Thus we are taught, that the essence of both is the same; that the one is inseparable from, and not to be conceived of without, the other; consequently, that neither of them ever was or could be alone. The Son is declared to be of the same nature and eternity with the Father: "And from hence, more particularly, the Church seems to have taken the occasion of confessing, in opposition to the Arian heresy, as we find it done in one of our Creeds, that 'Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, was begotten of the Father before all worlds, that he is God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, of one substance with the Father, by whom all things are made.'"+ Certainly, this brightness, or effulgence from the Father, is expressly spoken of the Son; but it cannot be affirmed of him with reference to his humanity; and, if it must necessarily be understood of his superior, his divine, nature, it necessarily implies the idea which is suggested by Sonship. For if the second Person

* It may be granted, that *κληρονομίω* is not always used to express the obtaining of a thing by strict hereditary right; but also to acquire it by other means, though still the idea of right is preserved. The argument of the Apostle, however, compels us to take the word in its primary and proper sense, which is well expressed in our translation "to obtain by inheritance." "The Apostle's argument, taken from the name 'Son of God,' is this,—he hath that name by inheritance, or on account of his descent from God; and Jesus, by calling himself 'the only-begotten of the Father,' hath excluded from that honourable relation angels and every other being whatever."—MACKNIGHT.

† Stanhope.

of the Trinity were co-ordinate and independent, in no good sense could he be the effulgence, the lustre, of the glory of the Father. He might exhibit an equal and rival glory, as one sun equally large and bright with another; but our Lord would, in that case, be no more an effulgence of the glory of the Father than one of these suns would be an effulgence of the other. The "express image of his person" is equally a note of filial Divinity. The word *χαρακτηρ* signifies an impression or mark, answering to a seal or stamp, or die, and therefore an exact and perfect resemblance, as the figure on the coin answers to the die by which it is stamped, and the image on the wax to the engraving on the seal. It is impossible that this should be spoken of a creature, because it cannot be true of any creature; and, therefore, not true of the human nature of our Lord. "The sentiment is, indeed, too high for our ideas to reach. This, however, seems to be fully implied in it, that the Son is personally distinct from the Father, for the impression and the seal are not one thing; and that the essential nature of both is one and the same,"* since one is so the exact and perfect image of the other, that our Lord could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."† Still, however, the likeness is not that of one independent and unrelated being to another, as of man to man; but the more perfect one of Son to Father. So it is expressly affirmed; for it is the Son who is this "express image:" Nor would the resemblance of one independent divine Person to another come up to the idea conveyed by *χαρακτηρ της υποστασεως*. Both this and the preceding phrase, "the brightness of his glory," with sufficient clearness denote, not only sameness of essence and distinction of person, but dependence and communication also; ideas which are preserved and harmonized in the doctrine of the Sonship of Christ, and in no other.

In the same conjunction of the term "Son" with ideas of absolute Divinity, the Apostle, in a subsequent part of the same chapter, applies that lofty passage in the forty-fifth psalm,

* Dr. P. Smith.

† *Imago majestatis Divinæ, ita, ut, qui Filium videt, etiam Patrem videat.*

—SCHLEUSNER.

“But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,” &c. The Socinian criticisms on these verses have already been refuted; and it is only necessary now to remark on them as they are in proof of the divine Sonship. “It is allowed, by all who hold his Deity, that Christ is here addressed as a Being composed of two natures, God and man. The unction with the ‘oil of gladness,’ and the elevation above his ‘fellows,’ characterize the manhood; and the perpetual stability of his throne, and the unsullied justice of the government, declare the Godhead.”* He is, however, called “the Son;” but this is a term which could not characterize the Being here introduced, unless it agreed to his higher and divine nature. The Son is addressed; that Son is addressed as “God,” as God whose throne is for ever and ever; and by this argument it is that the Apostle proves the Son to be superior to angels.

A few other passages may be introduced, which, with equal demonstration, attach the term “Son,” eminently and emphatically, to our Lord’s divine nature.

“God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.” (Rom. viii. 3.) Here the Person entitled the “Son” is said to be sent in the likeness of sinful flesh. In what other way could he have been sent, if he were “Son” only as a man? The Apostle most clearly intimates, that he was “Son” before he was sent; and that flesh was the nature assumed by the “Son,” but not the nature in which he was the “Son,” as he there uses the term.

“Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant; but Christ as a Son over his own house.” (Heb. iii. 5, 6.) “This is illustrative of the position before laid down, verse 3, that Jesus was counted worthy of more glory than Moses. The Jewish lawgiver was only ‘as a servant,’ but Christ ‘as a Son:’ But if the latter were only a Son in a metaphorical sense, the contrast would be entirely destroyed; he could only be a servant, like Moses, and the grounds of his superiority, ‘as a Son,’ would be completely subverted; he must, there-

* Bishop Horsley

fore, be a Son in respect to his divine nature. In conformity with this conclusion, it is here said that Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant in the Jewish church, but Christ was faithful over his own house; over the Christian church as its Lord and Master.* *Moses erat εν τῷ οἴκῳ, et pertinebat ad familiam; Christus vero επι τον οἶκον, supra familiam, ut ejus præfectus et dominus.*† “He says that Moses was faithful as a servant, Christ as a Son; and that Christ was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house; that is, the difference between Christ and Moses is that which is between him who creates and the thing created.”‡ To be a Son is, then, in the Apostle’s sense of the passage, to be a Creator; and to be a servant, a creature; a decisive proof that Christ is called “Son,” as God, because he is put in contradistinction to a creature.

To these may be added all those passages in which the first Person is called the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; because as, when the Persons are distinctly spoken of, it is clear, that he who produced the human nature of Christ, in the womb of the virgin, was the third Person, a fact several times emphatically and expressly declared in the New Testament; so, as far as natural relation is concerned, the first Person can only have paternity with reference to the divine nature of the Son; and we are reduced to admit, either that the terms “Father” and “Son” are wholly figurative, or that they express a natural relation, which relation, however, can only subsist between these Persons in the Godhead.

“For,” as it has been very justly observed, “at the very same time that our Lord most expressly calls the first Person of the Godhead his Father, he makes the plainest distinction that is possible between the Father, as such, and the Holy Ghost. By the personal acts which he ascribes to the Spirit of God, he distinguishes the first Person, as his Father, from the third Person of the divine essence; for, he said, ‘I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that

* Holden’s Testimonies.

+ Rosenmüller.

‡ Bishop Tomline.

he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth.' This Comforter, said he, 'is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.'* Here our Lord calls the first Person, most expressly and undeniably, 'the Father;' and the third Person, as expressly, 'the Holy Ghost.' It is most evident, and beyond even the possibility of a doubt, that he does not, by these two appellatives, mean one and the self-same divine Person; for he says, he 'will pray the Father' to send the Comforter to his church, calling him 'the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in his name.' And he sends 'the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, from the Father, which proceedeth from the Father.' Therefore, the Holy Ghost is not that Father, nor the self-same subsistent as that Father, nor is the creation of the human nature the only-begetting, or the scriptural Sonship, of our Lord Jesus Christ; for, if this were really so, the Father would be sending forth the Father, and the Father would be proceeding from the Father, and the Son would be praying for all this. But these are absurdities too glaring to be indulged for a single moment by common sense; so that, we conceive, it must be as clear as the light of heaven, that the first and second Persons of the Godhead are to each other a Father and a Son in the divine essence."†

Thus, then, from the import of these passages, (and many others might be added, were it necessary,) I think that it is established, that the title "Son of God" is not an appellative of the human nature applied by metonymy to the divine nature, as the objectors say; and that it cannot, on this hypothesis, be explained. As little truth will be found in another theory, adopted by those who admit the Divinity of our Lord, but deny his eternal filiation;—that he is called "Son of God" on account of his incarnation; that, in the Old Testament, he was so called in anticipation of this event, and in the New, because of the fact that he was God manifest in the flesh.

* John xiv. 16, 17, 26; xv. 26.

† Martin On the Eternal Sonship of Christ.

As, however, all such persons acknowledge the title "Son of God" to be a descriptive, not an arbitrary, title, and that it has its foundation in some real relation ; so, if the incarnation of Christ be the foundation of that title, it must be used with reference either to the nature in which he was incarnated, that is to say, his manhood ; or to that which incarnated itself, that is to say, his Godhead ; or to the action of incarnation, that is, the act of assuming our nature. If the first be allowed, then this is saying no more than that he is the Son of God, because of his miraculous conception in the womb of the Virgin, which has been already refuted. If the second, then it is yielded, that, with reference to the Godhead, he is the Son, which is what we contend for ; and it is allowed, that the "holy thing," or offspring, born of Mary, is, therefore, called "the Son of God," not because his humanity was formed in her womb immediately by God, but, as it is expressly stated in Luke i. 35, because "the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee," the effect of which would be the assumption of humanity by the divine nature of Him who is, in that nature, the Son ; and that the holy offspring should, on that account, be called "the Son of God." This would fully allow the doctrine of Christ's divine Sonship, and is, probably, the real import of the important passage referred to.* But if the title "Son" is given to

* Many interpreters understand by "the power of the Highest," which overshadowed the virgin, the second Person of the Trinity, who then took part of our nature. See WOLFII *Cur. in loc.* Most of them, however, refer both clauses to the Holy Spirit. But still, if the reason why the "holy thing," which was to be born of Mary, derived its special and peculiar sanctity from the personal union of the Divinity with the manhood, the reason of its being called "the Son of God" will be found rather in that to which the humanity was thus united than in itself. The remarks of Professor Kidd, in his Dissertation on the Eternal Sonship of Christ, are also worthy of consideration. "Our Lord's human nature had never subsistence by itself." "That nature never had personality of itself." "Hence our Lord is the Son of God, with respect to his divine nature, which, alone, was capable of Sonship. The question to be decided is, What object was termed 'the Son of God?' Was it the human nature considered by itself? This it could not be, seeing that the humanity never existed by itself, without inhering in the Divinity. Was it the humanity and Divinity when united, which, in consequence of their union,

Christ, neither with reference to the miraculous conception of the human nature, nor yet because the higher nature united to it in one Person is, eminently and peculiarly, the Son of God ; then it only remains to those who refer the title to the incarnation of our Lord, to urge that it is given to him with reference to the act of incarnation, that is to say, the act of assuming our nature. Now, it is impossible to maintain this ; because it has no support from Scripture. The passage in Luke i. 35, has been adduced ; but that admits certainly only of one of the two interpretations above given. Either the coming of the Holy Ghost upon the virgin, and the overshadowing of the power of the Highest, refer to the immediate production of the humanity by divine power, so that for this reason he is called “the Son of God ;” (which might be allowed without excluding a higher and more emphatic reason for the appellation ;) or it expresses the assumption of human nature through the “power of the Highest,” by the divine nature of Christ, so that “the holy offspring” should be called “the Son of God,” not because a divine Person assumed humanity, but because that divine Person was antecedently the Son of God, and is spoken of as such by the Prophets. The mere act of assuming our nature gives no idea of the relationship of a Son ; it is neither a paternal nor a filial act in any sense, nor expresses any such relation. It was an act of the Son alone ; “forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also took part of the same ;” and, as his own act, it could never place him in the relation of Son to the Father. It was done, it is true, in pursuance of the will of the Father, who sent him on this errand of mercy into the world ; but it was still an act done by the Son, and could not lay the foundation of a filial title and character. This hypothesis cannot, therefore, be supported. If then, the title “Son of God,” as given to our Lord, is not used chiefly, probably not at all, with

obtained this as a mere appellation ? We apprehend that it was not. We conceive, that the peculiarly appropriate name of our Lord’s divine Person is ‘Son of God ;’ that his Person was not changed by the assumption of humanity, and that it is his eternal Person, in the complex natures of Divinity and humanity, which is denominated ‘Son of God.’ ”

reference to his miraculous conception ; if it is not an appellative of his human nature, occasionally applied to him when divine acts and relations are spoken of, as any other human appellation, by metonymy, might be applied ; if it is not given him simply because of his assuming our nature ; if we find it so used, that it can be fully explained by no office with which he is invested, and by no event of his mediatorial undertaking ; it then follows, that it is a title characteristic of his mode of existence in the divine essence, and of the relation which exists between the first and second Persons in the ever-blessed Trinity. Nor is it to be regarded as a matter of indifference, whether we admit the eternal filiation of our Lord, provided we acknowledge his Divinity. It is granted, that some Divines, truly decided on this point, have rejected the divine Sonship. But in this they have gone contrary to the judgment of the churches of Christ in all ages ; and they would certainly have been ranked among heretics in the first and purest times of the primitive church, as Bishop Bull has largely and most satisfactorily shown in his Judgment of the Catholic Church ; nor would their professions of faith in the Divinity of Christ have secured them from the suspicion of being allies, in some sort, of the common enemies of the faith. nor have been sufficient to guard them from the anathemas with which the Fathers so carefully guarded the sacred doctrine of Scripture respecting the person of our Lord. Such theologians have usually rejected the doctrine, too, on dangerous grounds ; and have resorted to modes of interpretation, so forced and unwarrantable, that, if turned against the doctrines which they themselves hold sacred, would tend greatly to unsettle them. In these respects they have often adopted the same modes of attack, and objections of the same character, as those which Arians and Socinians have wielded against the doctrine of the Trinity itself, and have thus placed themselves in suspicious company and circumstances. The very allegation, that “ the divine Sonship of Christ is a mere speculation, of no importance, provided his Divinity be held,” is itself calculated to awaken vigilance ; since the most important doctrines have sometimes been stolen away whilst men have slept, and

the plea which has lulled them into security has always been, that they were not fundamental. I would not, indeed, say that the doctrine in question is fundamental. I am not indisposed to give up that point with Episcopius and Waterland, who both admitted the divine Sonship; though I would not concede its fundamental character on the same grounds as the former, but with the caution of the latter, who had views much more correct on the question of fundamental truths. But, though the Sonship of Christ may be denied by some who hold his Divinity, they do not carry out their own views into their logical conclusions, or it would appear that their notions of the Trinity greatly differ, in consequence, from those which are held by the believers in this doctrine; and that, on a point confessedly fundamental, they are, in some important respects, at issue with the orthodox of all ages. This, alone, demands their serious reflection, and ought to induce caution; but other considerations are not wanting to show that points of great moment are involved in the denial or maintenance of the doctrine in question.

1. The loose and general manner in which many passages of Scripture that speak of Christ as a Son must be explained, by those who deny the divine filiation of Christ, seems to sanction principles of interpretation which would be highly dangerous, or rather absolutely fatal, if generally applied to the Scriptures.

2. The denial of the divine Sonship destroys all relation among the Persons of the Godhead; for no other relations of the hypostases are mentioned in Scripture, save those which are expressed by paternity, filiation, and procession; every other relation is merely economical; and these natural relations being removed, we must then conceive of the Persons in the Godhead as perfectly independent of each other; a view which has a strong tendency to endanger the unity of the essence.*

* "According to the opinion of the ancients, which is also the voice of common sense, if there were two unbegotten or independent principles in the Divinity, the consequence would be, that not only the Father would be deprived of his pre-eminence, being of and from himself alone; but also, &c."

3. It is the doctrine of the divine paternity only which preserves the scriptural idea that the Father is the fountain of Deity ; and, as such, the first, the original, the principle. Certainly, he must have read the Scriptures to little purpose, who does not perceive that this is their constant doctrine,—that “ of him are all things ; ” that though the Son is Creator, yet that it was by the Son the Father made the worlds ; and that, as to the Son, he himself has declared, that he lives by the Father, and that the Father hath given him to have life in himself, which can only refer to his divine nature, nothing being the source of life in itself but what is divine ; a view which is put out of all doubt by the declaration, that, by the gift of the Father, the Son hath life in himself, “ as the Father hath life in himself.” But where the essential paternity of the Father and the correlative filiation of the Son are denied, these scriptural representations have no foundation in fact, and are incapable of interpretation. The term “ Son ” at once preserves the scriptural character of the Father, and sets up an everlasting barrier against the Arian heresy of inferiority of essence ; for, as Son, he must be of the same essence as the Father.

there would necessarily be two Gods. On the other hand, supposing the subordination, by which the Father is God of himself, and the Son God of God, the doctors have thought both the Father’s pre-eminence and the divine monarchy safe.”—BISHOP BULL.

“ As it is admitted, that there are three Persons in the Godhead, these three must exist, either independently of each other, or in related states. If they exist independently of each other, they are, then, each an independent Person, and may act independently and separately from the rest ; consequently, there would be three independent and separate Deities existing in the divine essence.” —KIDD.

The orthodox faith keeps us at the utmost distance from this error. “ The Father,” says Bishop Bull, “ is the principle of the Son and Holy Spirit, and both are propagated from him by an interior production, not an external one. Hence it is, that they are not only of the Father, but in him, and the Father in them ; and that one Person cannot be separate from another in the holy Trinity, as three human persons or three other subjects of the same species are separate. This kind of existing in, if I may so say, our Divines call ‘ circum-incession,’ because by it some things are very much distinguished from one another without separation ; are in, and, as it were, penetrate one another, without confusion.”—*Judgment of the Catholic Church.*

4. The scriptural doctrines of the perfect equality of the Son, so that he is truly God, equal in glory and perfection to the Father, being of the same nature ; and, at the same time, of the subordination of the Son to the Father, so that he should be capable of being “ sent ;” are to be equally maintained only by the doctrine of the divine Sonship. According to those who deny this doctrine, the Son might as well be the first as the second Person in the Godhead ; and the Father the second as well as the first. The Father might have been sent by the Son, without incongruity ; or either of them by the Holy Spirit. On the same ground, the order of the solemn Christian form of blessing, in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, so often introduced in the New Testament, is grounded on no reason whatever, and might be altered at pleasure. These are most violent and repulsive conclusions, which the doctrine of the Sonship avoids, and thus proves its accordance with the holy Scriptures.

5. The love of the Father in the gift of his Son, a doctrine so emphatically and so frequently insisted upon in Scripture, can have no place at all in the religious system of those who deny the relations of Father and Son to exist in the Godhead. This I take to be fatal to the doctrine ; for it insensibly runs into the Socinian heresy, and restricts the love of the Father, in the gift of his Son, to the gift of a man only, if the Sonship of Christ be human only ; and, in that case, the permission of the sufferings of Christ was no greater a manifestation of God’s love to the world, than his permitting any other good man to die for the benefit of his fellow-creatures,—St. Paul, for instance, or any of the martyrs. Episcopius, though he contends against the doctrine of the divine Sonship of our Lord being considered as fundamental, yet argues the truth of the doctrine on this very ground :—

“ We have thus far adduced those passages of Scripture from which we believe it evident, that something more is ascribed to Jesus Christ than can possibly belong to him under the consideration of man born of a virgin ; nay, something is attributed to him which not obscurely argues, that, before he was born of the virgin, he had been, (*fuisse atque*

extitisse,) and had existed as the Son of God the Father. The reasons derived from Scripture which seem to demonstrate this are the following :—

“ First, from John v. 18, and x. 33, it is apparent, that Jesus Christ had spoken in such a manner to the Jews, that they either understood or believed that nothing less than this was spoken by Christ, that he attributed to himself something greater than could be attributed to a human being,” &c. After proceeding to elucidate these two passages at some length, Episcopus adds,

“ The second reason is, it is certain the charity and love of God is amazingly elevated and extolled, by which he sent his own and only-begotten Son into the world, and thus gave him up, even to the death of the cross, to save sinners, who are the sons of God’s wrath. (John iii. 16 ; Rom. v. 10 ; viii. 32 ; 1 John iv. 9, 10.) But if ‘ the only-begotten Son of God ’ has no signification except ‘ Jesus with regard to his humanity and his being born of a virgin,’ the reason is not so apparent why this love should be so amazingly enhanced, as it is when ‘ God’s only-begotten Son ’ signifies ‘ the Son who was begotten of the Father before all ages.’ For that Son, who was born of the virgin Mary, was born of her for this very purpose,—that he might be delivered to death for sinners. But what pre-eminence of love is there in the fact of God delivering this his Son to death, whom it was his will to be born of Mary, and to be conceived of his Holy Spirit, with the intention that he should die for sinners ? But if you form a conception of the Son of God, who was begotten of his Father (*ante secula*) before all worlds ; whom it was not compulsory to send into the world, and who was under no obligation to become man ; whose dignity was greater than allowed him to be involuntarily sent or to come into flesh, much less that he should be delivered to death ; nay, who, as the only-begotten and sole Son, appeared dearer to the Father than to be thrust out from him into this misery. When you have formed this conception in your mind, then will the splendour and glory of the divine charity and love towards the human race shine forth with the greater intensity.”*

* *Episcopii Inst. Theol.*

To the doctrine of our Lord's eternal Sonship some objections have been made, drawn from the supposed reason and nature of things ; but they admit of an easy answer. The first is, "If the Son be of the Father in any way whatsoever, there must have been a commencement of his existence." To this objection the following is a satisfactory answer :—

"As sure, they are ready to argue, as every effect is posterior to its cause, so must Christ have been posterior to that God of whom he is the effect, or emanation, or offspring, or Son, or image, or by whatever other name you please to call him. Hence a Socinian writer says, 'The invention of men has been long enough upon the rack to prove, in opposition to common sense and reason, that an effect may be co-eternal with the unoriginate cause that produced it. But the proposition has mystery and falsehood written in its forehead, and is only fit to be joined with transubstantiation, and other mysteries of the same nature.' If these terms are properly taken, it will be found, that, though every effect may be said to be posterior to its cause, it is merely in the order of nature, and not of time ; and, in point of fact, every effect, properly so called, is co-existent with its cause, and must, of necessity, exactly answer to it, both in magnitude and duration ; so that an actually infinite and eternal cause implies an actually infinite and eternal effect.

"Many seem to imagine, as the words 'cause' and 'effect' must be placed one after the other, and the thing intended by the latter is different from what is meant by the former, that, therefore, a cause must precede its effect, at least some very short time. But they ought to consider, that if any thing be a cause, it is a cause. It cannot be a cause and the cause of nothing ; no, not for the least conceivable space of time. Whatever effect it may produce hereafter, it is not the actual cause of it till it is actually in being ; nor can it be, in the very nature of things.

"Now, suppose I should call the Son of God, 'the infinite and eternal effect of an infinite and eternal cause ;' however the terms of the proposition might be cavilled with, and however sophistry avail itself of the imperfection of human language

and the ambiguity of words to puzzle the subject, in the sense in which I take the terms, 'cause' and 'effect,' the proposition is true, and cannot be successfully controverted. And though I would by no means affect such language, yet I should be justified in its use by the early orthodox writers of the church, both Greek and Latin,* who do not hesitate to call the Father, 'the cause of the Son;' though the Latins generally preferred using the term *principium*, which, in such a connexion, is of the same import as 'cause.' Nor can we consider the following words of our blessed Redeemer in any other view: 'I live by the Father,' (John vi. 57,) and, 'As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.' (John v. 26.) Such language can never be understood of the mere humanity of Christ. When the early ecclesiastical writers used the terms in question, it was not with the most distant intention of intimating any inferiority of nature in the Son. And when they called him 'God of God,' they never meant to represent him as a creature. Therefore, it was added to the expression, in the Nicene Creed, 'Light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance,' or nature, 'with the Father, and the Maker of all things.' They neither confound the Persons, nor divide the substance, of the Godhead. And we shall soon see that, in this, they followed the obvious and undoubted meaning of the word of God. They made use of the very best terms they could find in human language, to explain the truth of God, in a most important article of faith, and to defend it against the insidious attacks of heresy. And if those who affect to despise them would study their writings with candour, they would find that, though they were men, and, as such, liable to err, they were great men, and men who thought as well as wrote; who thought deeply on the things of God, and did not speak at random.

"Some persons think they reduce the doctrine in question to an absurdity, by saying, 'If the Father generate the Son,

* See Bull's *Defensio Fidei Nicænæ*, and the notes of Bishop Pearson's most excellent work on the Creed.

he must either be always generating him, or an instant must be supposed when his generation was completed. On the former supposition, the Son is and must ever remain imperfect, and, in fact, ungenerated; on the latter, we must allow that he cannot be eternal.' No one can talk in this manner, who has not first confounded time with eternity, the creature with the Creator; beings whose existence, and modes, and relations are swallowed up and lost in the divine eternity and immensity, with Him who is, in all essential respects, eternal and infinite. The orthodox maintain, that the Son of God is what he is from everlasting, as well as the Father. His generation no more took place in any imaginary point of eternity than it took place in time. Indeed, all duration which is commenced, is time; and time it must ever remain. Though it may never end, it can never be actual eternity; nor can any being whose existence has commenced, ever become actually eternal. The thing implies a contradiction in terms.

"The nature of God is perfect from everlasting; and the generation of the Son of God was no voluntary and successive act of God, but something essential to the Godhead, and therefore natural and eternal. We may illustrate this great subject, though we can never fully comprehend it. All natural agents, as we call them, act or operate uniformly and necessarily. If they should change their action or operation, we should immediately infer a change of their nature. For their existence, in a certain state, implies that action or operation. They act, or operate, by what we call 'a necessity of nature;' or, as any plain uneducated man would express himself, 'It is their nature so to do.' Thus the fountain flows; thus the sun shines; thus the mirror reflects whatever is before it. No sooner did the fountain exist, in its natural state, than it flowed; no sooner did the sun exist, in its natural state, than it shone; no sooner did the mirror exist, in its natural state, than it reflected the forms placed before it. These actions or operations are all successive, and are measured by time, because the things from whence they result exist in time, and their existence is necessarily successive. But had the fountain existed from everlasting, in its natural state, from everlasting

it must have flowed ; had the sun so existed, so it must have shone ; had the mirror so existed, so it must have reflected whatever was before it. The Son of God is no voluntary effect of the Father's power and wisdom, like the created universe, which once did not exist, and might never have existed, and must, necessarily, be ever confined within the bounds of time and space : He is the natural and necessary, and therefore the eternal and infinite, birth of the divine fecundity, the boundless overflow of the eternal fountain of all existence and perfection, the infinite splendour of the eternal sun, the unspotted mirror and complete and adequate image, in whom may be seen all the fulness of the Godhead. This places the orthodox faith at an equal distance from the Sabellian and Arian heresies, and will ever make that distance absolutely infinite. This is no figure of speech, but a most sober truth."*

In the eloquent and forcible passage just quoted, the opposition betwixt a necessary and a voluntary effect is to be understood of arbitrary will ; for, otherwise, the ancients scrupled not to say, that the generation of the Son was with the will of the Father ; some, that he could not but eternally will it, as being eternally good ; others, that, since the will of God is God himself, as much as the wisdom of God is God himself, whatever is the fruit and product of God is the fruit and product of his will, wisdom, &c., and so the Son, being the perfect image of the Father, is substance of substance, wisdom of wisdom, will of will, as he is light of light, and God of God, which is St. Austin's doctrine. That the generation of the Son may be by necessity of nature, without excluding the concurrence or approbation of the will, in the sense of consent, approbation, and acquiescence, is shown by Dr. Waterland, in his *Defence of Queries* ; and to that the reader who is curious in such distinctions is referred. They are distinctions, however, the subtlety of which will often be differently apprehended by different minds ; and they are, therefore, scarcely allowable, except when used defensively, and to silence an opposer who resorts to subtleties for the propagation

* France's Three Discourses on the Person of Christ.

of error. The sure rock is the testimony of God, which admits of no other consistent interpretation than that above given. This being established, the incomprehensible and mysterious considerations, connected with the doctrine, must be left among those deep things of God which, in the present state at least, we are not able to search and fathom. For this reason, the attempts which have been made to indicate, though faintly, the manner of the generation of the Son, are not to be commended. Some of the Platonizing Fathers taught, that the existence of the Son flowed necessarily from the divine intellect exerted on itself. The Schoolmen agitated the question, whether the divine generation was effected by intellect or by will. The Father begetting a Son, the exact counterpart and equal of himself, by contemplating and exerting his intelligence upon himself, is the view advocated by some Divines, both of the Romish and Protestant communions. Analogies have also been framed between the generation of the Son by the Father, and the mind's generation of a conception of itself in thought. Some of these speculations are almost obsolete ; others continue to this day. It ought, however, to be observed, that they are wholly unconnected with the fact, as it is stated, authoritatively and doctrinally stated, in Scripture. These are atmospheric haloes about the sun of revelation, which, in truth, are the product of a lower region, though they may seem to surround the orb itself. Of these notions Zanchius has well observed, "As we have no proof of these from the word of God, we must reject them as rash and vain, that is, if the thing be positively asserted so to be." Indeed, we may ask, with the Prophet, "Who shall disclose his generation?" On this subject Cyril of Jerusalem wisely says, "Believe, indeed, that God has a Son ; but to know how this is possible be not curious. For if thou searchest, thou shalt not find. Therefore, elevate not thyself, (in the attempt,) lest thou fall. Be careful to understand those things alone which are delivered to thee as commands. First, declare to me who is the Father, and then thou wilt acknowledge the Son. But if thou canst not ascertain (*cognoscere*) the nature of the Father, display no curiosity about knowing the mode

of the Son. With regard to thyself, it is sufficient for all the purposes of godliness to know, that God has one only Son."

Proved, then, as I think it irrefragably is, by Scripture testimony, that the title "Son of God" contains a revelation of the Divinity of our Lord, as a Person of the same nature and essence with the Father, we may proceed to another of the most emphatic and celebrated appellations of our blessed Saviour,—“the Word.”

Under this title our Saviour is abruptly announced in the introduction to St. John's Gospel; for that he is intended, cannot be a matter of doubt. In the fifth verse, the Word is called “the Light.” In verse 7, John Baptist is said to bear witness of that Light. Again, in verse 14, the Word is said to have been made flesh, and to have dwelt among us; and, in verse 15, that John bears witness of him. “The Word” and “the Light,” to whom John bears witness, are names, therefore, of the same Being; and that Being is, in verse 17, declared to be Jesus Christ.*

The manner in which St. John commences his Gospel is strikingly different from the introductions to the histories of Christ by the other Evangelists; and no less striking and peculiar is the title under which he announces him, “the Word.” It has, therefore, been a subject of much inquiry and discussion, from whence this Evangelist drew the use of this appellation, and what reasons led him, as though intending to solicit particular attention, to place it at the very head of his Gospel. That it was for the purpose of establishing an express opinion, as to the personal character of Him whom it is used to designate, is made more than probable from the predominant character of the whole Gospel, which is more copiously doctrinal, and contains a record more full of what Jesus said, as well as did, than the others.

As to the source from which the term “Logos” was drawn

* *Per τον λογον intelligi Christum caret dubio. Nam v. 6, 7, scriptor dicit, Joannem Baptistam de hoc λογω testimonium dixisse; constat autem eum de Christo dixisse testimonium; et v. 14, sequitur, λογον hominem esse factum, et Apostolos hujus λογου, hominis facti, vidisse dignitatem; atqui Christi maiestatem quotidie oculis videbant.*—ROSENMULLER.

by the Apostle, some have held it to be taken from the Jewish Scriptures ; others, from the Chaldee paraphrases ; others, from Philo and the Hellenizing Jews. The most natural conclusion certainly appears to be, that, as St. John was a plain, unlearned man, chiefly conversant in the holy Scriptures, he derived this term from the sacred books of his own nation, in which the Hebrew phrase, *Dabar Jehovah*, “ the Word of Jehovah,” frequently occurs in passages which must be understood to speak of a personal Word, and which phrase is rendered *Λογος Κυριου* by the Septuagint interpreters. Certainly, there is not the least evidence in his writings, or in his traditional history, that he ever acquainted himself with Philo or with Plato ; and none, therefore, that he borrowed the term from them, or used it in any sense approaching to or suggested by these refinements : In the writings of St. Paul there are allusions to poets and philosophers ; in those of St. John, none. We have already seen, that the Hebrew Scriptures contain frequent intimations of a distinction of Persons in the Godhead ; that one of these divine Persons is called “ Jehovah ;” and, though manifestly represented as existing distinct from the Father, is yet arrayed with attributes of Divinity, and was acknowledged by the ancient Jews to be, in the highest sense, “ their God,” the God with whom, through all their history, they chiefly “ had to do.” This divine Person we have already proved to have been spoken of by the Prophets as the future Christ ; we have shown, too, that the Evangelists and Apostles represent Jesus as that divine Person of the Prophets ; and if, in the writings of the Old Testament, he is also called “ the Word,” the application of this term to our Lord is naturally accounted for. It will then appear to be a theological, not a philosophic, appellation, and one which, previously even to the time of the Apostle, had been stamped with the authority of inspiration. It is not, indeed, frequently used in the Old Testament, which may account for its not being adopted as a prominent title of Christ by the other Evangelists and Apostles ; but that, notwithstanding this infrequency, it is thus used by St. John, has a sufficient reason, which shall be presently adduced.

In *Genesis* xv. 1, we are told, that “the Word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram : I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” Here the Word of the Lord is the speaker : “The Word came, saying :” A mere word may be spoken or said ; but a personal Word only can say, “I am thy shield.” The pronoun “I” refers to the whole phrase, “the Word of Jehovah ;” and, if a personal Word be not understood, no Person at all is mentioned by whom this message is conveyed, and whom Abram, in reply, invokes as “Lord God.” The same construction is seen in *Psalms* xviii. 30, “The Word of the Lord is tried ; he is a buckler to all that trust in him.” Here the pronouns refer to “the Word of the Lord,” in the first clause ; nor is there any thing in the context to lead us to consider the Word mentioned to be a grammatical word, a verbal communication of the will of another, in opposition to a personal Word. This passage is, indeed, less capable of being explained, on the supposition of an ellipsis, than that in *Genesis*. In this personal sense, also, *1 Samuel* iii. 21, can only be naturally interpreted : “And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh ; for the Lord revealed,” showed, “himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the Word of the Lord.” Here it is first declared, that the Lord appeared ; then follows the manner of his appearance or manifestation, “by the Word of the Lord.” In what manner could he appear, except by his personal Word in vision ? Again : A comparison of two passages will make it probable, that the personal Word is intended in some passages, and was so understood by the ancient Jews, where there are no marked circumstances of construction to call our attention to it. In *2 Samuel* vii. 21, we find, “For thy Word’s sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these things.” But in the parallel passage in *1 Chronicles* xvii. 19, it is read, “O Lord, for thy servant’s sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all this greatness.” “Servant” is, unquestionably, an Old Testament appellation of Messiah ; and not a few passages might be adduced, where the phrases, “for thy servant’s sake,” “for thy name’s sake,” indicate a mediatorial character vested in some exalted and divine

Personage. The comparison of these two passages, however, is sufficient to show, that a personal character is given to the Word mentioned in the former.

All that has been said by opposing criticism, upon these, and a few other passages in which the phrase occurs, amounts to no more than that they may be otherwise interpreted, by considering them as elliptical expressions. The sense above given is, however, the natural and obvious one ; and, if it also accounts better for the frequent use of the terms, " Word," " Word of the Lord," among the ancient Jewish writers, this is an additional reason why it should be preferred. The Targumists use it with great frequency ; and, should we even suppose Philo and the Hellenistic Jews to have adopted the term " Logos " from Plato and the Greeks, yet the favouritism of that term, so to speak, and the higher attributes of glory and Divinity with which they invest their Logos, is best accounted for by the correspondence of this term with one which they had found before, not only among their own interpreters, but in the sacred writings themselves.

Reference has been made to the Targums, and they are in further evidence of the theological origin of this appellation. The Targums, or Chaldee paraphrases of the Old Testament, were composed for the use of the common people among the Jews, who, after their return from captivity, did not understand the original Hebrew. They were read in the synagogues every Sabbath-day, and with the phrases which they contain all Jews would, of course, be familiar. Now, in such of these paraphrases as are extant, so frequently does the phrase " the Word of Jehovah " occur, that in almost every place where Jehovah is mentioned in the Old Testament, as holding any intercourse with men, this circumlocution is used. " The Lord created man in his own image," is, in the Jerusalem Targum, " The Word of Jehovah created man." " Adam and Eve heard the voice of the Lord God," is paraphrased, " They heard the voice of the Word of the Lord God." " The Lord thy God, he it is that goeth before thee," is, in the Targum, " Jehovah thy God, his Word goeth before thee." The Targumists read, for " I am thy shield," (Gen.

xv. 1,) “My Word is thy shield ;” for “Israel shall be saved in the Lord,” (Isaiah xlv. 17.) “By the Word of the Lord ;” for “I am with thee,” (Jer. i. 8,) “My Word is with thee ;” and in Psalm cx. 1, instead of, “The Lord said unto my Lord,” they read, “The Lord said unto his Word ;” and so in a great number of places.

The Socinian answer is, that this phraseology of the Targums is an idiom of the Chaldee language, and that “the word of a person is merely synonymous with himself.” It must certainly be allowed, that the *Memra* of the Chaldee paraphrasts has not in every case a personal sense, nor, indeed, has “Logos,” or “Word,” by which it may be translated ; but, as the latter is capable of being used in a personal sense, so is the former ; and, if passages can be found in the Targums where it is evident that it is used personally and as distinct from God the Father, and cannot, without absurdity, be supposed to be used otherwise, the objection is fully invalidated. This has, I think, been very satisfactorily proved. So in one of the above instances : “They heard the voice of the Word of the Lord God walking in the garden.” Here, “walking” is, undoubtedly, the attribute of a person, and not of a mere voice ; and that the person referred to is not the Father, appears from the author Tzeror Hammor, who makes this observation on the place : “Before they sinned they saw the glory of the blessed God speaking with him, that is, with God ; but after their sin they only heard the voice walking :” A trifling remark ; but sufficient to show that the Jewish expositors considered the voice as a distinct person from God.

The words of Elijah, 1 Kings xviii. 24, “I will call on the name of the Lord,” &c., are thus paraphrased by Jonathan : “I will pray in the name of the Lord, and he shall send his Word.” The paraphrast could not refer to any message from God ; for it was not an answer by word, but by fire, that Elijah expected. It has never been pretended, either by Socinians, or by the orthodox, that God the Father is said to be “sent.” If there be but one divine Person, by whom is he sent ?

We learn, from Genesis xvi. 7, &c., that “the Angel of the

Lord found Hagar by a fountain of water;" that he said, "I will multiply thy seed exceedingly," and that "she called the Name of Jehovah that spake to her, Thou God seest me." It is evident that Hagar considered the person who addressed her as divine. Philo asserts that it was the Word who appeared to her. Jonathan gives the same view: "She confessed before the Lord Jehovah, whose Word had spoken to her." With this the Jerusalem Targum agrees: "She confessed and prayed to the Word of the Lord who had appeared to her." It is in vain to say, in the Socinian sense, that God himself is here meant. For the paraphrasts must have known, from the text, that the person spoken of is called an "Angel." If the Father be meant, how is he called an "Angel."

"They describe the Word as a Mediator. It is said, 'For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?' (Deut. iv. 7.) Jonathan gives the following paraphrase of the passage: 'God is near in the name of the Word of the Lord.' Again, we find this paraphrase on Hosea iv. 9, 'God will receive the prayer of Israel by his Word, and have mercy upon them, and will make them by his Word like a beautiful fig-tree.' And on Jer. xxix. 14, 'I will be sought by you in my Word, and I will be inquired of through you by my Word.' According to the Jerusalem Targum on Gen. xxi. 33, Abraham at Beersheba 'prayed in the name of the Word of the Lord, the God of the world.' But it is inconceivable, that the paraphrasts did not here mean to describe the Word as a Mediator; especially as we know that the ancient Jews, when supplicating God, entreated that he would look on the face of his Anointed.

"They speak of atonement as made by this *Memra*. On Deut. xxxii. 43, Jonathan observes, 'God will atone by his Word for his land, and for his people, even a people saved by the word of the Lord.'

"They describe the *Memra* as a Redeemer, and sometimes as the Messiah. These words, 'I have waited for thy salvation,' (Gen. xlix. 18,) are thus paraphrased in the Jerusalem Targum: 'Our father Jacob said thus: My soul expects not

the redemption of Gideon the son of Joash, which is a temporary salvation ; nor the redemption of Samson, which is a transitory salvation ; but the redemption which thou didst promise should come through thy *Memra* to thy people. This salvation my soul waits for.' In the blessing of Judah (verses 10—12) particular mention is made of the King Messiah. It is a striking proof that by the *Memra* they meant Him who was to appear as the Messiah, that in the Targum of Jonathan, verse 18 is thus rendered : ' Our father Jacob said, I do not expect the deliverance of Gideon the son of Joash, which is a temporal salvation ; nor that of Samson the son of Manoah, which is a transient salvation. But I expect the redemption of the Messiah, the Son of David, who shall come to gather to himself the children of Israel.' It is evident that the one paraphrast has copied from the other ; and as the one puts Messiah for *Memra*, it cannot well be denied that they had considered both terms as denoting the same person.

" They describe this *Memra* as 'only-begotten,' and, in this character, as the Creator. That remarkable verse, Gen. iii. 22, 'The Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us,' is paraphrased in a very singular manner : 'The Word of the Lord said, Behold, Adam whom I have created is the only-begotten in the world, as I am the only-begotten in the highest heavens.' The language here ascribed to the *Memra*, with what reference to the text avails not in the present inquiry, is applicable to a person only ; and it will not be pretended by our opponents, that it can apply to the Father. The person intended was believed to be 'the only-begotten Word.' How nearly does this language approach to that of inspiration ! 'In the beginning was the Word. All things were made by him. We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.' (John i. 1, 3, 14.)

" If, therefore, the paraphrasts describe the *Memra* as one sent, as a Mediator, as one by whom atonement is made, as a Redeemer and the Messiah, and as only-begotten, it is undeniable that they do not mean God the Father. If, notwithstanding, they ascribe personal and divine characters

to the Word, they must mean a distinct Person in the divine essence."*

The same personality, and the same distinction, we find in the passage, "God came to Abimelech;" in the Targum, "His Word came from the face of God to Abimelech." Equally express is the personal distinction in Psalm cx. 1: "Jehovah said unto his Word, Sit thou at my right hand." Here the Word cannot be the Jehovah that speaks, and a person only could sit at his right hand. This passage, too, proves that the ancient Jews applied the term "Word" to the Messiah; for, as we may learn from our Lord's conversation with the Pharisees, it was a received opinion, that this passage was spoken of the Messiah.

Now, as some of the Targums still extant are older than the Christian era, and contain the interpretations of preceding paraphrases now lost; and as there is so constant an agreement among them in the use of this phrase, we can be at no loss to discover the source whence St. John derived the appellation "Logos." He had found it in the Hebrew Scriptures; and he had heard it, in the Chaldee paraphrases, read in the synagogues, by which it was made familiar to every Jew. Dr. P. Smith, in his Scripture Testimony, hesitates as to the personal sense of the *Memra* of the Chaldee paraphrasts, and inclines to consider it as used in the sense of a reciprocal pronoun, denoting, in its usual application to the divine Being, "God his very self." On this supposition it is, however, impossible to interpret some of the passages above given. Its primary import, he says, "is that, whatever it may be, which is the medium of communicating the mind and intentions of one person to another." The Jews of the same age or a little after, and Philo, he admits, used the term "Word" with a personal reference; for such "an extension and reference of the term would flow from the primary signification, a medium of rational communication:" But if Philo and those Jews thus extended the primary meaning of this word, why might not the Chaldee paraphrasts extend it before

* Jamieson's Vindication.

them? They did not invent the term, and affix to it its primary meaning. They found it in the Chaldee tongue, as we find “word” in English; and that they sometimes use it in its primary sense, is no proof at all that they did not use it also in a personal or extended one. That a second Jehovah is mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures, as the medium of communication with men, cannot be denied; and *Memra* would, therefore, be, according to this explanation of its primary meaning, a most fit term to express his person and office. It is also a strong evidence in favour of the personal sense of this term, that “Maimonides himself, anxious as he was to obscure all those passages of Scripture that imply a divine plurality, and to conceal every evidence of the Jews having ever held this doctrine, had not boldness enough to assert, that, with the Chaldee interpreters, the Word of God was merely synonymous to God himself. He knew that the Targums afforded such unquestionable evidence of the introduction of a distinct Person under this designation, that every one of his countrymen who was in the least acquainted with them, would give him the lie. Therefore he finds himself reduced to the miserable shift of pretending that, when the paraphrasts speak of ‘the Word of the Lord,’ and use this expression where the name of God occurs in the original, they mean to describe a created angel.” *

“Upon the whole, then,” says Dr. Laurence, “how are we to determine the sense of this singular phrase? Although we consider it neither as a reciprocal, nor as intended to designate the second Person in the Trinity, who, becoming incarnate, lived and died for us, of which, perhaps, the Targumists themselves might have had, at best, but indistinct, or even incorrect, ideas, yet may we, most probably, regard it, in its general use, as indicative of a divine Person. That it properly means the ‘Word of the Lord,’ or his will declared by a verbal communication, and that it is sometimes literally so taken, cannot be denied. But it seems impossible to consult the

* *Et fuit Verbum Domini ad me, &c. Fieri quoque potest meo judicio ut Onkelos per vocem ELOHIM, Angelum intellexerit, &c. MORE NEVOCHIM, part i., c. 27, p. 33.*

numerous passages where personal characteristics are attributed to it, and to conceive that it does not usually point out a real Person. Whether the Targumists contemplated this hypostatical Word as a true subsistence in the divine nature, or as a distinct emanation of Deity, it may be useless to inquire, because we are deficient in data adequate to a complete decision of the question" *

Philo, and the philosophic Jews, may, therefore, be well spared in the inquiry as to the source from whence St. John derives the appellative "Logos." Whether the Logos of Philo be a personified attribute or a person, has been much disputed, but is of little consequence on this point. It may, however, be observed, that, as the evidence predominates in favour of the personality of the Logos of Philo in numerous passages of his writings, this will also show, that not only the Jewish writers, who composed the paraphrases, and the common people among the Jews, in consequence of the Targums being read in the synagogues, but also those learned men who addicted themselves to the study of the Greek philosophy, were familiar with the idea of a Logos as a Person distinct from God, yet invested with divine attributes and performing divine works. The question as to Philo is not whether he sometimes speaks of a personified Logos, that is, of an attribute or conception of God, arrayed in poetic personal properties,—this is granted; but whether he also speaks of a Logos who is a real and a divine Person. Now, when he calls this Logos "God, a second God, the Son of God, the First-begotten, the beloved Son;" speaks of him as superior to angels, as the Creator of the world, as seeing all things, as the Governor and Sustainer, as a Messenger, as the Shepherd of the flock; of men being freed from their sins by him, as the true High Priest, as a Mediator, and in other similar and personal terms, which may all be verified by consulting his writings, or the selections given in Kidd's Demonstration, Allix's Judgment, Bryant's Philo, Laurence's Dissertation, and other works; he cannot, by any possibility of

construction, be supposed to personify the mere attribute of the Reason or Wisdom of God, or any conception and operation of the divine Intellect. This may be the only Logos of Plato ; for, though the Christianized Platonists, of a lower period, used this term in a personal sense, there is but slender evidence to conclude that Plato used it as the name of a person distinct from God. Certain it is, that the Logos of Philo is arrayed in personal characters which are not found in the writings of Plato ; a fact which will with great difficulty be accounted for upon the supposition that the Jewish philosopher borrowed his notions from the Greek. Philo says, that “ the Father has bestowed upon this Prince of angels his most ancient Logos, that he should stand as a Mediator, to judge between the creature and the Creator. He therefore intercedes with him who is immortal, in behalf of mortals ; and, on the other hand, he acts the part of an Ambassador, being sent from the supreme King to his subjects. And this gift he so willingly accepts, as to glory in it, saying, “ I have stood between God and you, being neither unbegotten as God, nor begotten like mortals, but one in the middle, between two extremes, acting the part of a hostage with both : With the Creator, as a pledge that he will never be provoked to destroy or desert the world, so as to suffer it to run into confusion ; and with creatures, to give them this certain hope, that God, being reconciled, will never cease to take care of his own workmanship. For I proclaim peace to the creation from that God who removes war and introduces and preserves peace for ever.” Now, when he expresses himself in this manner, who can reconcile this to a mere personification from the Greek philosophy ? or suppose that from it Philo obtained ideas so evangelical that, were there not good evidence of his not having been acquainted with Christianity, we should rather conceive of him as of a Scribe, so far as this passage goes, well instructed in the kingdom of heaven ? Even Dr. Priestley acknowledges that Philo “ made a much more substantial personification of the Logos than any of the proper Platonists had done.” * Substantial indeed it is ; for, although, in some

* Early Opinions.

passages, in the vigour of his discursive and allegorizing genius, "he enshrines his Logos behind such a veil of fancy, that we can scarcely discern his person in the sanctuary;" yet, in the above and many other passages, "he draws aside the veil, and shows him to us in his full proportions."* For what conceivable attribute of Deity, or ideal thing whatever, could any writer, allegorist as he might be, not insanely raving, call "Prince of angels," "Mediator," "Intercessor," "neither unbegotten as God nor begotten like mortals," "an Ambassador sent from God to men," interposing between an offended God, to restrain his anger and to give "peace" to the world? Who could speak of these attributes or idealities, in language anticipatory of an incarnation, as "a man of God, immortal and incorruptible;" as "the man after the image of God;" or ascribe to him a name "unspeakable and incomprehensible," and affirm that he is a "fabricator," or Creator, and "divine, who will lie up close to the Father," exactly where St. John places him, "in the very bosom of the Father?" For, however mysteriously Philo speaks in other passages, he says nothing to contradict these; and they must be taken as they are. They express a real personality, and show, at the same time, that they could not be borrowed from Plato. It is not necessary to enter into the question, whether that philosopher ascribed a real personality to his Logos or not. If he gives him a real and divine personality, then the inference will be that he derived his notion from the Jews, or from ancient patriarchal tradition; and it would be most natural for Philo, finding a personal and divine Logos in Plato, to enlarge the scanty conceptions of the philosopher from the theology of his own country. On the other hand, if we suppose the Logos of Plato to be a mere personification, either Philo must have improved it into a real person, consistent with his own religion; or, sometimes philosophizing on a mere personified Logos and sometimes introducing the personal Logos of his own nation and native schools, he gives us the key to all those passages which would appear inconsistent with each other if

* Whitaker's Origin of Arianism.

interpreted only of one and the same subject, and if he were regarded as speaking exclusively either of a personified or a real *Lōgos*. "From all the circumstances it seems to be the most reasonable conclusion, that the leading acceptance of the *Memra*, or *Logos*, among the Jews of this middle age was to designate an intermediate agent; that, in the sense of a Mediator between God and man, it became a recognised appellation of the Messiah; that the personal doctrine of the Word was the one generally received, and that the conceptual notion which Philo interweaves with the other was purely his own invention, the result of his theological philosophy." *

As the doctrine of a personal *Logos* was not derived by Philo from Platonism, so his own writings, as decidedly as the reason of the case itself, will show, that the source from which he did derive it was the Scriptures and the Chaldee paraphrases; or, in other words, the established theology of his nation. Philo had not suffered the doctrine of the Hebrew Scriptures, of a *Jehovah* acting in the name and under the commission of another *Jehovah* as well as his own, to go unnoticed. The passages of the Old Testament in which a personal Word, the *Dabar Jehovah*, occurs, had not been overlooked, nor the more frequent use of an equivalent phrase in the *Memra* of the paraphrasts. "There is a time," he observes, "when he, the holy *Logos*, inquires of some, as of Adam, 'Where art thou?'" exactly corresponding with the oldest Targumists: "The Word of the Lord called to Adam." Again, with reference to Abraham and Lot: "Of whom, the *Logos*, it is said, 'The sun came out upon the earth, and Lot entered into Sijor, and the Lord rained brimstone and fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah. For the *Logos* of God, when he comes out to our earthly system, assists and helps those who are related to virtue,' " &c. So by Onkelos and Jonathan, the appearances of God to Abram are said to be appearances of the Word; and twice in the fifteenth chapter of Genesis "the Word of the Lord" is said to come to Abraham. The Being who appeared to Hagar, of whom she

* Dr. Smith's Person of Christ.

said, "Thou God seest me," Philo also calls "the Logos." The Jehovah who stood above the ladder of Jacob, and said, "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father," has the same appellation, and he who spake to Moses from the bush. It is thus that Philo accords with the most ancient of the interpreters of his nation in giving the title *Memra*, or Logos, or Word, to the ostensible Deity of the Jewish dispensation ; in which, too, they were authorized by the use of the same term, in the same application, by the sacred writers themselves. Why, then, resort to Plato, when the source of the Logos of Philo is so plainly indicated ? And why suppose St. John to have borrowed from Philo, when the Logos was an established form of theological speech, and when the sources from which Philo derived it, the Scriptures and the paraphrases, were as accessible to the Apostle as to the philosophical Jew of Alexandria ?

As Philo mingled Platonic speculations with his discourses on the real Logos of his national faith, without, however, giving up personality and divinity ; so the Jews of his own age mingled various crude and darkening comments with the same ancient faith drawn from the Scriptures, and transmitted with the purer parts of their tradition. The paraphrases and writings of Philo remain, however, a striking monument of the existence of opinions as to a distinction of Persons in the Godhead, and the divine character of a Mediator and interposing Agent between God and man, as indicated in their Scriptures, and preserved by their theologians.

Celebrated as this title of the Logos was in the Jewish theology, it is not, however, the appellation by which the Spirit of inspiration has chosen that our Saviour should be principally designated. It occurs but a very few times, and principally and emphatically in the introduction to St. John's Gospel. A cogent reason can be given why this Apostle adopts it ; and we are not without a probable reason why, in the New Testament, the title "Son of God" should have been preferred, which is, likewise, a frequent title of the Logos in the writings also of Philo.

"Originating from the spiritual principle of connexion

betwixt the first and the second Being in the Godhead ; marking this by a spiritual idea of connexion ; and considering it to be as close and as necessary, as the Word is to the energetic mind of God, which cannot bury its intellectual energies in silence, but must put them forth in speech ; it is too spiritual in itself to be addressed to the faith of the multitude. If, with so full a reference to our bodily ideas, and so positive a filiation of the second Being to the first, we have seen the grossness of Arian criticism, endeavouring to resolve the doctrine into the mere dust of a figure ; how much more ready would it have been to do so, if we had only such a spiritual denomination as this for the second ? This would certainly have been considered by it as too unsubstantial for distinct personality, and therefore too evanescent for equal divinity.” *

Of the reason of its occasional use by St. John, a satisfactory account may also be given. The following is a clear abridgment of the ampler discussions on this subject which have employed many learned writers :—

“ Not long after the writings of Philo were published, there arose the Gnostics, a sect, or rather a multitude of sects, who, having learnt in the same Alexandrian school to blend the principles of oriental philosophy with the doctrine of Plato, formed a system most repugnant to the simplicity of Christian faith. It is this system which Paul so often attacks under the name of ‘ false philosophy, strife of words, endless genealogies, science falsely so called.’ The foundation of the Gnostic system was the intrinsic and incorrigible depravity of matter. Upon this principle they made a total separation between the spiritual and the material world. Accounting it impossible to educe out of matter any thing which was good, they held that the supreme Being, who presided over the innumerable spirits that were emanations from himself, did not make this earth, but that a spirit of an inferior nature, very far removed in character, as well as in rank, from the supreme Being, formed matter into that order which constitutes the world, and gave life to the different creatures that

* Whitaker's Origin of Arianism.

inhabit the earth. They held that this inferior spirit was the ruler of the creatures whom he had made ; and they considered men, whose souls he imprisoned in earthly tabernacles, as experiencing under his dominion the misery which necessarily arose from their connexion with matter, and as estranged from the knowledge of the true God. Most of the later sects of the Gnostics rejected every part of the Jewish law, because the books of Moses gave a view of the creation inconsistent with their system. But some of the earlier sects, consisting of Alexandrian Jews, incorporated a respect for the law with the principles of their system. They considered the Old Testament dispensation as granted by the Demiurgus, the Maker and Ruler of the world, who was incapable, from his want of power, of delivering those who received it from the thralldom of matter : And they looked for a more glorious messenger, whom the compassion of the supreme Being was to send for the purpose of emancipating the human race. Those Gnostics who embraced Christianity regarded the Christ as this Messenger, an exalted Æon, who, being in some manner united to the man Jesus, put an end to the dominion of the Demiurgus, and restored the souls of men to communion with God. It was natural for the Christian Gnostics who had received a Jewish education to follow the steps of Philo, and the general sense of their countrymen, in giving the name Logos to the Demiurgus. And as *Christos* was understood from the beginning of our Lord's ministry to be the Greek word equivalent to the Jewish name Messiah, there came to be, in their system, a direct opposition between *Christos* and Logos. The Logos was the Maker of the world ; *Christos* was the Æon sent to destroy the tyranny of the Logos.

“ One of the first teachers of this system was Cerinthus. We have not any particular account of all the branches of his system ; and it is possible that we may ascribe to him some of those tenets by which later sects of Gnostics were discriminated. But we have authority for saying, that the general principle of the Gnostic scheme was openly taught by Cerinthus before the publication of the Gospel of John. The authority is that of Irenæus, a Bishop who lived in the second

century, who in his youth had heard Polycarp, the disciple of the Apostle John, and who retained the discourses of Polycarp in his memory till his death. There are yet extant of the works of Irenæus five books which he wrote against heresies, one of the most authentic and valuable monuments of theological erudition. In one place of that work he says, that Cerinthus taught in Asia that the world was not made by the supreme God, but by a certain power very separate and far removed from the Sovereign of the universe, and ignorant of his nature.* In another place, he says, that John the Apostle wished, by his Gospel, to extirpate the error which had been spread among men by Cerinthus;† and Jerome, who lived in the fourth century, says, that John wrote his Gospel, at the desire of the Bishops of Asia, against Cerinthus and other heretics, and chiefly against the doctrines of the Ebionites, then springing up, who said, that Christ did not exist before he was born of Mary.‡

“ From the laying these accounts together, it appears to have been the tradition of the Christian church, that John, who lived to a great age, and who resided at Ephesus, in proconsular Asia, was moved by the growth of the Gnostic heresies, and by the solicitations of the Christian teachers, to bear his testimony to the truth in writing, and particularly to recollect those discourses and actions of our Lord which might furnish the clearest refutation of the persons who denied his pre-existence. This tradition is a key to a great part of his Gospel. Matthew, Mark, and Luke had given a detail of those actions of Jesus which are the evidences of his divine mission; of those events in his life upon earth which are most interesting to the human race; and of those moral discourses in which the wisdom, the grace, and the sanctity of the Teacher shine with united lustre. Their whole narration implies that Jesus was more than man. But as it is distinguished by a beautiful simplicity, which adds very much to their credit as historians, they have not, with the exception of a few incidental

* Iren. *contra Hær.*, lib. iii., c. xi. 1.

† Ibid., lib. i., c. xxvi. 1.

‡ Jerome *De Vit. Illust.*, c. ix.

expressions, formally stated the conclusion that Jesus was more than man ; but have left the Christian world to draw it for themselves from the facts narrated, or to receive it by the teaching and the writings of the Apostles. John, who was preserved by God to see this conclusion, which had been drawn by the great body of Christians, and had been established in the Epistles, denied by different heretics, brings forward, in the form of a history of Jesus, a view of his exalted character, and draws our attention particularly to the truth of that which had been denied. When you come to analyze the Gospel of St. John, you will find that the first eighteen verses contain the positions laid down by the Apostle, in order to meet the errors of Cerinthus ; that these positions, which are merely affirmed in the introduction, are proved in the progress of the Gospel, by the testimony of John the Baptist, and by the words and the actions of our Lord ; and that after the proof is concluded by the declaration of Thomas, who, upon being convinced that Jesus had risen, said to him, ‘ My Lord, and my God,’ John sums up the amount of his Gospel in these few words : ‘ These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ;’ that is, that Jesus and the Christ are not distinct persons, and that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The Apostle does not condescend to mention the name of Cerinthus, because that would have preserved, as long as the world lasts, the memory of a name which might otherwise be forgotten. But although there is dignity and propriety in omitting the mention of his name, it was necessary, in laying down the positions that were to meet his errors, to adopt some of his words, because the Christians of those days would not so readily have applied the doctrine of the Apostle to the refutation of those heresies which Cerinthus was spreading among them, if they had not found in the exposition of that doctrine some of the terms in which the heresy was delivered : And as the chief of these terms, ‘ Logos,’ which Cerinthus applied to an inferior spirit, was equivalent to a phrase in common use among the Jews, ‘ the Word of Jehovah,’ and was probably borrowed from thence, John, by his use of Logos, rescues it from the degraded use of Cerinthus, and

restores it to a sense corresponding to the dignity of the Jewish phrase." *

The Logos was no fanciful term, merely invented by St. John, *pro re natâ*, or even suggested by the Holy Spirit, as a suitable title for a Prophet by whom God chose to reveal himself or his Word. It was a term diversely understood in the world before St. John began his Gospel. Is it possible, therefore, that he should have used the term without some express allusion to these prevailing opinions? Had he contradicted them all, it would, of course, have been a plain proof, that they were all equally fabulous and fanciful; but by adopting the term, he certainly meant to show, that the error did not consist in believing that there was a Logos, or Word of God, but in thinking amiss of it. We might, indeed, have wondered much had he decidedly adopted the Platonic or Gnostic notions, in preference to the Jewish; but that he should harmonize with the latter, is by no means surprising; first, because he was a Jew himself; and, secondly, because Christianity was plainly to be shown to be connected with, and, as it were, regularly to have sprung out of, Judaism. It is certainly, then, in the highest degree consistent with all we could reasonably expect, to find St. John and others of the sacred writers expressing themselves in terms not only familiar to the Jews under the old covenant, but in such as might tend, by a perfect revelation of the truth, to give instruction to all parties; correcting the errors of the Platonic and oriental systems, and confirming, in the clearest manner, the hopes and expectations of the Jews.†

Whilst the reasons for the use of this term by St. John are obvious, the argument from it is irresistible; for, first, the Logos of the Evangelist is a Person, not an attribute, as many Socinians have said, who have, therefore, sometimes chosen to render it "wisdom." For if it be an attribute, it were a mere truism to say, that "it was in the beginning with God;" because God could never be without his attributes. The Apostle also declares, that the Logos was "the Light;" but

* Hill's Lectures.

† See Nares's Remarks on the Socinian Version.

that John the Baptist “was not the Light.” Here is a kind of parallel supposed ; and it presumes, also, that it was possible that the same character might be erroneously ascribed to both.

“Between person and person this may, undoubtedly, be the case ; but what species of parallel can exist between man and an attribute ? Nor will the difficulty be obviated by suggesting, that wisdom here means not the attribute itself, but him whom that attribute inspired, the man Jesus Christ, because the name of our Saviour has not yet been mentioned ; because that rule of interpretation must be inadmissible, which at one time would explain the term ‘Logos’ by an attribute, at another, by a man, as best suits the convenience of hypothesis ; and because, if it be, in this instance, conceived to indicate our Saviour, it must follow, that our Saviour created the world, (which the Unitarians will by no means admit,) for the Logos, who was that which John the Baptist was not, ‘the true Light,’ is expressly declared to have made the world.”*

Again : The Logos was made flesh, that is, became man ; but in what possible sense could an attribute become man ? The Logos is “the only-begotten of the Father ;” but it would be uncouth to say of any attribute, that it is begotten ; and, if that were passed over, it would follow, from this notion, either that God has only one attribute, or that wisdom is not his only-begotten attribute. Further : St. John uses terms decisively personal, as that he is God ; not divine, as an attribute, but God, personally ; not that he was in God, which would properly have been said of an attribute ; but with God, which he could only say of a person ; that “all things were made by him ;” that he was “in the world ;” that “he came to his own ;” that he was “in the bosom of the Father ;” and that “he hath declared the Father.” The absurdity of representing the Logos of St. John as an attribute seems, at length, to have been perceived by the Socinians themselves, and their new Version accordingly regards it as a personal term.

* Laurence’s Dissertation on the Logos.

If the Logos is a Person, then is he divine ; for, first, eternity is ascribed to him : “ In the beginning was the Word.” The Unitarian comment is, “ From the beginning of his ministry, or the commencement of the Gospel dispensation ;” which makes St. John use another trifling truism, and solemnly tell his readers, that our Saviour, when he began his ministry, was in existence ;—“ In the beginning of his ministry the Word was.” It is true, that *αρχη*, “ the beginning,” is used for the beginning of Christ’s ministry, when he says that the Apostles had been “ with him from the beginning ;” and it may be used for the beginning of any thing whatever. It is a term which must be determined in its meaning by the context ;* and the question, therefore, is, how the connexion here determines it. Almost immediately it is added, “ All things were made by him ;” which, in a preceding chapter, has been proved to mean the creation of universal nature. He, then, who made all things was prior to all created things ; he was when they began to be, and before they began to be ; and, if he existed before all created things, he was not himself created, and was, therefore, eternal.† Secondly. He is expressly called “ God,” in the same sense as the Father ; and, thirdly, he is as explicitly said to be the Creator of all things. The two last particulars have already been largely established, and nothing need be added, except, as another proof that the Scriptures can only be fairly explained by the doctrine of a distinction of divine Persons in the Godhead, the declaration of St. John may be adduced, that “ the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” What hypothesis but this goes a single step to explain this wonderful language ? Arianism, which allows the pre-existence of Christ with God, accords with the first clause, but contradicts the second. Sabellianism, which reduces the personal to an official, and, therefore, a

* *Quotiescunque fit principii mentio, significationem illius ad id de quo accommodare necesse est.*—BEZA.

† *Valde errant, qui ex αρχη interpretantur de initio Evangelii ; huic enim sententiæ consilium Joannis, et sequens oratio apertè repugnat. Si vero δ Λογος fuit jam tum, quum mundus esse cœpit, sequitur eum fuisse ante mundum conditum ; sequitur etiam eum non esse unam ex ceteris creatis rebus, quæ cum mundo esse cœperunt, sed aliâ naturæ conditione.*—ROSEN MULLER.

temporal, distinction, accords with the second clause, but contradicts the first ; for Christ, according to this theory, was not with God in the beginning, that is, in eternity. Socinianism contradicts both clauses ; for, on that scheme, Christ was neither with God in the beginning, nor was he God. “ The faith of God’s elect ” agrees with both clauses, and by both it is established : “ The Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

CHAPTER XIII.

Christ possessed of divine Attributes.

HAVING considered the import of some of the titles applied to our Lord in the Scriptures, and proved that they imply Divinity, we may next consider the attributes which are ascribed to him in the New Testament. If to names and lofty titles which imply Divinity, we find added attributes never given to creatures, and from which all creatures are excluded, the Deity of Christ is established beyond reasonable controversy. No argument can be more conclusive than this. Of the essence of Deity we know nothing, but that he is a Spirit. He is made known by his attributes; and it is from them we learn that there is an essential distinction between him and his creatures, because he has attributes which they have not; and those which they have in common with him, he possesses in a degree absolutely perfect. From this it follows, that his is a peculiar nature; a nature *sui generis*, to which no creature does or can possibly approximate. Should, then, these same attributes be found ascribed to Christ, as explicitly and literally as to the Father, it follows of necessity, that, the attributes being the same, the essence is the same, and that essence, the exclusive nature of the Θεότης, or "Godhead." It would, indeed, follow, that if but one of the peculiar attributes of Deity were ascribed to Christ, he must possess the whole, since they cannot exist separately; and whoever is possessed of one must be concluded to be in possession of all.* But it is not one attribute only, but all the attributes of Deity which are ascribed to him; and not only those which are moral, and which are, therefore, capable of being communi-

* *Attributa Divina arctissimo copulari vinculo, sic, ut nullum separatim concipi queat, adeoque qui uno pollet, omnibus ornetur.*—DOEDERLEIN.

cated, (though those, as they are attributed to Christ in infinite degree and in absolute perfection, would be sufficient for the argument,) but those which are, on all sides, allowed to be incommunicable, and peculiar to the Godhead.

Eternity is ascribed to him: "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." "Everlasting Father" is variously rendered by the principal orthodox critics; but every rendering is in consistency with the application of a positive eternity to the Messiah, of which this is allowed to be a prediction. Bishop Lowth says, "The Father of the everlasting age." Bishop Stock, "The Father of eternity;" that is, the owner of it. Dathe and Rosenmüller, "*Æternus*." The former considers it an oriental idiom, by which names of affinity, as "father," "mother," &c., are used to denote the author or eminent possessor of a quality or object: "I am the First and the Last; I am he that liveth and was dead;" (Rev. i. 17, 18;) so also Rev. ii. 8; and in both passages the context shows, indisputably, that it is our Lord himself who speaks, and applies these titles to himself. In Rev. xxii. 13, also, Christ is the speaker, and declares himself to be "Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." Now, by these very titles is the eternity of God declared: "I am the First, and I am the Last; and beside me there is no God." "Before me was there no God formed, neither shall there be after me." (Isaiah xlv. 6; xliii. 10.) But they are, in the Book of Revelation, assumed by Christ as explicitly and absolutely; and they clearly affirm, that the Being to whom they are applied had no beginning, and will have no end. In Rev. i. 8, after the declaration, "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord," it is added, "which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Some have referred these words to the Father; but certainly without reason, as the very scope of the passage shows. It is Christ who speaks in the first person, throughout the chapter, when the sublime titles of the former part of the verse are used, and, indeed, throughout the book;

and to interpret this particular clause of the Father would introduce a most abrupt change of persons, which, but for a false theory, would never have been imagined. The words, indeed, do but express the import of the name Jehovah, so often given to Christ; and as, when the Father is spoken of in verse 4, the same declaration is made concerning him which, in verse 8, our Lord makes of himself, it follows, that if the terms, “which was, and is, and is to come,” are descriptive of the eternity of the Father, they are also descriptive of eternity as an attribute also of the Son. We have a similar declaration in Heb. xiii. 8: “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;” where eternity, and its necessary concomitant, immutability, are both ascribed to him. That the phrase, “yesterday, to-day, and for ever,” is equivalent to eternity, needs no proof; and that the words are not spoken of the doctrine of Christ, as the Socinians contend, appears from the context, which scarcely makes any sense upon this hypothesis,* since a doctrine once delivered must remain what it was at first. This interpretation, also, gives a figurative sense to words which have all the character of a strictly literal declaration; and it is a further confirmation of the literal sense, and that Christ is spoken of personally, that *ὁ αὐτός* is the phrase by which the immutability of the Son is expressed in chap. i., verse 12: “But thou art *ὁ αὐτός* the same.” Pierce, in his Paraphrase, has well expressed the connexion: “Considering the conclusion of their life and behaviour, imitate their faith; for the object of their faith, Jesus Christ, is the same now as he was then, and will be the same for ever.” A Being essentially unchangeable, and therefore eternal, is the only proper object of an absolute faith. A similar and most solemn ascription of eternity and immutability occurs in Hebrews i. 10—12: “Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth: And the heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish; but thou remainest: And they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the

* See Macknight.

same, and thy years shall not fail." These words are quoted from Psalm cii., which all acknowledge to be a lofty description of the eternity of God. They are here applied to Christ ; and of him they affirm, that he was before the material universe ; that it was created by him ; that he has absolute power over it ; that he shall destroy it ; that he shall do this with infinite ease, as one who folds up a vesture ; and that, amidst the decays and changes of material things, he remains the same. The immutability here ascribed to Christ is not, however, that of a created spirit, which will remain when the material universe is destroyed ; for then there would be nothing proper to Christ in the text, nothing but that in which angels and men participate with him, and the words would be deprived of all meaning. His immutability and duration are peculiar, and a contrast is implied between his existence and that of all created things. They are dependent, he is independent ; and his necessary, and therefore eternal, existence must follow. The phrase "eternal life," when used, as it is frequently in St. John's Epistles, is also a clear designation of the eternity of our Saviour. "For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." In the first clause, Christ is called "the Life ;" he is then said to be "eternal ;" and, that no mistake should arise, as though the Apostle merely meant to declare that he would continue for ever, he shows that he ascribes eternity to him in his pre-existent state,—“that eternal life” which was “with the Father ;” and with him before he was “manifested to men.” An eternal pre-existence could not be more unequivocally marked.

To these essential attributes of Deity, to be without beginning and without change, is added that of being extended through all space. He is not only eternal, but omnipresent. Thus he declares himself to be at the same time in heaven and upon earth, which is assuredly a property of Deity alone : “No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” The genuineness of the last clause has been attacked by a few

critics ; but has been fully established by Dr. Magee.* This passage has been defended from the Socinian interpretation already, and contains an unequivocal declaration of ubiquity.

For “where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” How futile is the Socinian comment in the new Version ! This promise is to be “limited to the apostolic age.” But were that granted, what would the concession avail ? In the apostolic age, the disciples met in the name of their Lord many times in the week, and in innumerable parts of the world at the same time, in Judea, Asia Minor, Europe, &c. He, therefore, who could be in the midst of them, whenever and wherever they assembled, must be omnipresent. But they add, “by a spiritual presence, a faculty of knowing things in places where he was not present ;” “a gift,” they say, “given to the Apostles occasionally,” and refer to 1 Cor. v. 3. No such gift is, however, claimed by the Apostle in that passage, who knew the affair in the church of Corinth, not by any such faculty or revelation, but by “report.” (Verse 1.) Nor does he say, that he was present with them, but judged “as though he were present.” If, indeed, any such gift were occasionally given to the Apostles, it would be, not a “spiritual presence,” as the new Version has it ; but a figurative presence. No such figurative meaning is, however, hinted at in the text before us, which is as literal a declaration of Christ’s presence every where with his worshippers as that similar promise made by Jehovah to the Israelites : “In all places where I record my name I will come to thee, and I will bless thee.” At the very moment, too, of his ascension, that is, just when, as to his bodily presence, he was leaving his disciples, he promises still to be with them, and calls their attention to this promise, by an emphatic particle, “And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” (Matt. xxviii. 20.) The Socinians render it, “to the end of the age,” that is, “the Jewish dispensation, till the destruction of Jerusalem.” All that can be said in favour of this is, that the words may be so translated, if no regard is paid to their import.

* Magee On the Atonement.

But it is certain, that, in several passages, “the end of the world,” *ἡ συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος*, must be understood in its popular sense. That this is the sense here, appears, First, from the clause, “Lo, I am with you always,” *πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας*, “at all times.” Secondly, because spiritual presence stands, by an evidently implied antithesis, opposed to bodily absence. Thirdly, because that presence of Christ was as necessary to his disciples after the destruction of Jerusalem as till that period. But even were the promise to be so restricted, it would still be in proof of the omnipresence of our Lord; for, if he were present with all his disciples in all places, always, to the destruction of Jerusalem, it could only be by virtue of a property which would render him present to his disciples in all ages. The Socinian version intimates, that the presence meant is the gift of miraculous powers. Let even that be allowed, (though it is a very partial view of the promise,) then, if till the destruction of Jerusalem the Apostles were always, at all times, able to work miracles, the power to enable them to effect these wonders must always, and in all places, have been present with them; and if that were not a human endowment, if a power superior to that of man were requisite for the performance of the miracles, and that power was the power of Christ, then he was really, though spiritually, present with them, unless the attribute of power can be separated from its subject, and the power of Christ be where he himself is not. This, however, is a low view of the import of the promise, “Lo, I am with you;” which, both in the Old and New Testament, signifies “to be present with any one, to help, comfort, and succour him.” “*Εἶναι μετὰ τινος, Alicui adesse, juvare aliquem, curare res alicujus.*”*

It is not necessary to adduce more than another passage in proof of a point so fully determined already by the authority of Scripture. After the Apostle, in Colossians i. 16, 17, has ascribed the creation of all things in heaven and earth, “visible and invisible,” to Christ, he adds, “And by him all things consist.” On this passage, Raphelius cites a striking passage

* Rosenmüller.

from Aristotle, *De Mundo*, where the same verb, rendered "consist," by our translators, is used in a like sense to express the constant dependence of all things upon their Creator for continued subsistence and preservation: "There is a certain ancient tradition common to all mankind, that all things subsist from and by God, and that no kind of being is self-sufficient, when alone, and destitute of his preserving aid."* The Apostle then, here, not only attributes the creation, but the conservation, of all things to Christ: But to preserve them, his presence must be co-extensive with them; and thus the universe of matter and created spirits, heaven and earth, must be filled with his power and presence. "This short sentence implies, that our Lord's presence extends to every part of the creation; to every being and system in the universe;—a most striking and emphatical description of the omnipresence of God the Son."†

To these attributes of essential Divinity is added, a perfect knowledge of all things. This cannot be the attribute of a creature; for, though it may be difficult to say how far the knowledge of the highest order of intelligent creatures may be extended, yet is there knowledge of two kinds which God has made peculiar to himself by solemn and exclusive claim. The first is, the perfect knowledge of the thoughts and intents of the heart: "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins." (Jer. xvii. 10.) "Thou, even thou only," says Solomon, "knowest the hearts of all the children of men." (1 Kings viii. 39.) This knowledge is attributed to, and was claimed by, our Lord, and that without any intimation that it was in consequence of a special revelation, or supernatural gift, as in a few instances we see in the Apostles and Prophets, bestowed to answer a particular and temporary purpose. In such instances, also, it is to be observed, the knowledge of the spirits and thoughts of men was obtained in consequence of a revelation made to them by Him whose prerogative it is to search the heart. In the case of our Lord, it is, however, not

* Raphelius *in loc.* See also Parkhurst's *Lexicon*.

† Holden's *Scripture Testimonies*.

merely said, "And Jesus knew their thoughts," that he perceived in his spirit, that they so reasoned among themselves; but it is referred to as an attribute or original faculty, and it is, therefore, made use of by St. John, on one occasion, to explain his conduct with reference to certain of his enemies: "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man." After his exaltation, also, he claims the prerogative in the full style and majesty of the Jehovah of the Old Testament: "And all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and the heart."

A striking description of the omniscience of Christ is also found in Hebrews iv. 12, 13, if we understand it, with most of the ancients, of the hypostatic Word; to which sense, I think, the scope of the passage and contents clearly determines it. "For the Word of God is quick (living) and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart; neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; for all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." The reasons for referring this passage rather to Christ, the Author of the Gospel, than to the Gospel itself, are, first, that it agrees better with the Apostle's argument. He is warning Christians against the example of ancient Jewish unbelief, and enforces his warning by reminding them, that the Word of God discerns "the thoughts and intents of the heart." The argument is obvious, if the personal Word is meant; not at all so, if the doctrine of the Gospel be supposed. Secondly. The clauses, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight," and, "All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do," or "to whom we must give an account," are, undoubtedly, spoken of a person, and that person our witness and judge. Those, therefore, who think that the Gospel is spoken of in verse 12, represent the Apostle as making a transition from the Gospel to God himself in what follows.

This, however, produces a violent break in the argument, for which no grammatical or contextual reason whatever can be given; and it is evident that the same metaphor extends through both verses. This is taken from the practice of dividing and cutting asunder the bodies of beasts slain for sacrifice, and laying them open for inspection, lest any blemish or unsoundness should lurk within, and render them unfit for the service of God. "The dividing asunder of the joints and marrow," in the twelfth verse, and the being made "naked and open to the eyes," in the thirteenth, are all parts of the same sacrificial and judicial action, to which, therefore, we can justly assign but one agent. The only reason given for the other interpretation is, that the term "Logos" is nowhere else used by St. Paul. This can weigh but little against the obvious sense of the passage. St. Luke (i. 2) appears to use the term "Logos" in a personal sense, and he uses it but once; and if St. Paul uses it here, and not in his other Epistles, this reason may be given,—that in other Epistles he writes to Jews and Gentiles united in the same churches; here, to Jews alone, among whom we have seen that the Logos was a well-known theological term.*

The Socinians urge, against this ascription of infinite knowledge to our Lord, Mark xiii. 32: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only." The genuineness of the clause, "neither the Son," has been disputed, and is not inserted by Griesbach in his text; there is not, however, sufficient reason for its rejection, though certainly in the parallel passage, Matthew xxiv. 36, "neither the Son," is not found. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven; but my Father only." We are then reduced to this:—A number of passages explicitly declare that Christ knows all things; there is one which declares that the Son did not know "the day and the hour" of judgment;

* *Non deerat peculiaris ratio, cur Filium Dei sic vocaret, cum ad Hebræos scriberet, qui eum illo nomine indigitare solebant; ut constat ex Targum, cujus pars hoc tempore facta est, et ex Philone aliisque Hellenistis.*—POLI Synopsis.

again, there is a passage which certainly implies, that even this period was known to Christ; for St. Paul, (1 Tim. vi. 14,) speaking of the “appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” as the universal Judge, immediately adds, “which in his own times, *καρποὺς ἰδίοις*, shall show, who is the blessed and only potentate,” &c. The day of judgment is here called “his own times,” or “his own season,” which, in its obvious sense, means the season he has himself fixed, since a certain manifestation of himself is in its fulness reserved by him to that period. As “the times and the seasons,” also, are said, in another place, to be in the Father’s “own power;” so, by an equivalent phrase, they are here said to be in the power of the Son, because they are “his own times.” Doubtless, then, he knew “the day and the hour of judgment.”* Now, certainly, no such glaring and direct contradiction can exist in the word of truth, as that our Lord should know the day of judgment, and, at the same time, and in the same sense, not know it. Either, therefore, the passage in Mark must admit of an interpretation which will make it consistent with other passages which clearly affirm our Lord’s knowledge of all things, and, consequently, of this great day; or these passages must submit to such an interpretation as will bring them into accordance with that in Mark. It cannot, however, be in the nature of things that texts, which clearly predicate an infinite knowledge, should be interpreted to mean a finite and partial knowledge; and this attempt would only establish a contradiction between the text and the comment. Their interpretation is imperative upon us; but the text in Mark is capable of an interpretation which involves no contradiction or absurdity whatever, and which makes it accord with the rest of the Scripture testimony on this subject. This may be done two ways. The first is adopted by Macknight:—

“The word *οἰδεὶν* here seems to have the force of the Hebrew conjunction *hiphil*, which, in verbs denoting action, makes that action, whatever it is, pass to another. Wherefore, *εἰδεω*,

* *Καρποὺς ἰδίοις*, “*tempore, quod ipse novit.*” *Erat itaque tempus adventūs Christi ignotum Apostolis.*—ROSENMULLER.

which properly signifies, 'I know,' used in the sense of the conjunction *hiphil*, signifies, 'I make another to know, I declare.' The word has this meaning, without dispute: 'For I determined, *εἰδέναι*, to know nothing among you, but Jesus Christ and him crucified;' (1 Cor. ii. 2;) that is, I determined to make known, to preach, nothing but Jesus Christ. So, likewise, in the text, 'But of that day and that hour, none maketh you to know,' none hath power to make you know it; just as the phrase, 'is not mine to give,' (Matt. xx. 23,) signifies, 'is not in my power to give:'—'No, not the angels, neither the Son, but the Father.' Neither man nor angel, nor even the Son himself, can reveal the day and hour of the destruction of Jerusalem to you; because the Father hath determined that it should not be revealed."*

The second is the usual manner of meeting the difficulty, and refers the words, "neither the Son," exclusively to the human nature of our Lord, which we know, as to the body, "grew in stature," and, as to the mind, in "wisdom." Bishop Kidder, in answering the Socinian objection from the lips of a Jew, observes,—

"1. That we Christians do believe, not only that Christ was God; but also that he was perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.

"We do believe, that his body was like one of ours; a real, not a phantastic and imaginary, one.

"We do also believe, that he had an human soul, of the same nature and kind with one of ours; though it was free from sin, and all original stain and corruption. And no wonder, then, that we read of him, that he increased, not only in stature, and in favour with God and man, but in wisdom also. (Luke ii. 52.) Now, wisdom is a spiritual endowment, and belongs to the mind or soul. He could not be said to increase in wisdom as he was God; nor could this be said of him with respect to his body, for that is not the subject of wisdom; but with regard to the human soul of Christ, the other part of our human nature.

"2. It must be granted, that, as man, he did not know

* Harmony.

beyond the capacities of human and finite understanding ; and not what he knew as God : He could not be supposed to know in this respect things not knowable by man, any otherwise than as the divine nature and wisdom thought fit to communicate and impart such knowledge to him.

“ 3. That therefore Christ may be said, with respect to his human nature and finite understanding, not to know the precise time, the day and hour, of some future events.

“ 4. It is farther to be considered how the Evangelists report this matter ; they do it in such terms as are very observable : ‘ Of that day and hour knoweth no man ;’ it follows, ‘ neither the Son.’ He doth not say ‘ the Son of God,’ nor ‘ the Λογος,’ or ‘ Word,’ but ‘ the Son ’ only.

“ I do not know all this while, where there is any inconsistency in the faith of Christians [arising from this view] ; when we believe, that Jesus was ‘ in all things made like unto us,’ and, in some respects, ‘ a little lower than the angels.’ (Hebrews ii. 7, 17.) I see no force in the above-named objection.”*

The “ Son of man,” it is true, is here placed above the angels ; but, as Waterland observes, “ the particular concern the Son of man has in the last judgment is sufficient to account for the supposed climax or gradation.”

“ It is, indeed, objected by Socinians, that these interpretations of Mark xiii. 32, charge our Saviour, if not with direct falsehood, at least with criminal evasion ; since he could not say, with truth and sincerity, that he was ignorant of the day, if he knew it in any capacity ; as it cannot be denied that man is immortal, so long as he is, in any respect, immortal. The answer to this is, that as it may truly be said of the body of man that it is not immortal, though the soul is ; so it may, with equal truth, be said, that the Son of man was ignorant of some things, though the Son of God knew every thing. It is not, then, inconsistent with truth and sincerity for our Lord to deny that he knew what he really did know in one capacity, while he was ignorant of it in another. Thus, in one place he

says, 'Now I am no more in the world;' (John xvii. 11;) and in another, 'Ye have the poor always with you, but me ye have not always;' (Matt. xxvi. 11;) yet, on another occasion, he says, 'Lo, I am with you always;' (Matt. xxviii. 20;) and again, 'If any man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' (John xiv. 23.) From hence, we see that our Lord might, without any breach of sincerity, deny that of himself, considered in one capacity, which he could not have denied in another. There was no equivocation in his denying the knowledge of 'that day and that hour,' since, with respect to his human nature, it was most true; and that he designed it to refer alone to his human nature, is probable, because he does not say the Son of God was ignorant of that day, but the Son, meaning the Son of man, as appears from the context. (Matt. xxiv. 37, 39; Mark xiii. 26, 34.) Thus, Mark xiii. 32, which, at first sight, may seem to favour the Unitarian hypothesis, is capable of a rational and unforced interpretation, consistently with the orthodox faith."*

As the knowledge of the heart is attributed to Christ, so also is the knowledge of futurity; which is another quality so peculiar to Deity, that we find the true God distinguishing himself from all the false divinities of the Heathen by this circumstance alone: "To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?" "I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." (Isaiah xli. 5, 9, 10.) All the predictions uttered by our Saviour, and which are nowhere referred by him to inspiration, the source to which all the Prophets and Apostles refer their prophetic gifts, but were spoken as from his own prescience, are in proof of his possessing this attribute. It is also affirmed, that "Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him;" (John vi. 64;) and again, "For Jesus knew who should betray him." (John xiii. 11.)

* Holden's Testimonies.

Thus we find the Scriptures ascribing to Jesus an existence without beginning, without change, without limitation, and connected, in the whole extent of space which it fills, with the exercise of the most perfect intelligence. These are essential attributes of Deity. "Measures of power may be communicated; degrees of wisdom and goodness may be imparted to created spirits; but our conceptions of God are confounded, and we lose sight of every circumstance by which he is characterized, if such a manner of existence as we have now described be common to him and any creature."*

To these attributes may also be added Omnipotence, which is also peculiar to the Godhead; for, though power may be communicated to a creature, yet a finite capacity must limit the communication, nor can it exist infinitely, any more than wisdom, except in an infinite nature. Christ is, however, styled, "the Almighty." (Rev. i. 8.) To the Jews he said, "What things soever he," the Father, "doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." Further, he declares, that "as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;" which is a most strongly-marked distinction between himself and all creatures whatever. He has "life in himself," and he has it "as the Father" has it, that is, perfectly and infinitely; which sufficiently demonstrates that he is of the same essence, or he could not have this communion of properties, with the Father. The life is, indeed, said to be "given;" but this communication from the Father makes no difference in the argument. Whether the "life" mean the same original and independent life, which at once entitles the Deity to the appellations, "the living God" and "the Father of spirits," or the bestowing of eternal life upon all believers, it amounts to the same thing. The "life" which is thus bestowed upon believers, the continuance and perfect blessedness of existence, is from Christ as its fountain, and he has it as the Father himself hath it. By his eternal generation it was derived from the Father to him, and he possesses it equally with the Father; by the appointment of his Father, he is made the source of

eternal life to believers, as having that life in himself to bestow, and to supply for ever.

We may sum up the whole scriptural argument, from divine attributes being ascribed by the disciples to our Saviour, and claimed by himself, with his own remarkable declaration, "All things which the Father hath are mine." (John xvi. 15.) "Here he challenges to himself the incommunicable attributes, and consequently that essence which is inseparable from them."* "If God the Son hath all things that the Father hath, then hath he all the attributes and perfections belonging to the Father; the same power, rights, and privileges; the same honour and glory; and, in a word, the same nature, substance, and Godhead."†

* Whitby.

† Waterland.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Acts ascribed to Christ Proofs of his Divinity.

THIS argument is in confirmation of the foregoing ; for, if not only the proper names of God, his majestic and peculiar titles, and his attributes, are attributed to our Lord ; but if also acts have been done by him which, in the nature of things, cannot be performed by any creature, however exalted, then He by whom they were done must be truly God.

The first act of this kind is creation, the creation of all things. It is not here necessary to enter into any argument to prove that creation, in its proper sense, that is, the production of things out of nothing, is possible only to divine power. The Socinians themselves acknowledge this ; and therefore employ their perverting, but feeble, criticisms in a vain attempt to prove, that the creation, of which Christ, in the New Testament, is said to be the Author, is to be understood of a moral creation, or of the regulation of all things in the evangelic dispensation. I shall not adduce many passages to prove that a proper creation is ascribed to our Lord ; for they are sufficiently in the recollection of the reader. It is enough that two or three of them only be exhibited, which cannot be taken, without manifest absurdity, in any other sense than as attributing the whole physical creation to him.

The ascription of the creation of all things, in the physical sense, to the divine Word, in the introduction of St. John's Gospel, has been vindicated against the Socinian interpretation in a preceding page. I shall only further remark upon it, first, that if St. John had intended a moral, and not a physical, creation, he could not have expressed himself as he does, without intending to mislead ; a supposition equally contrary to his inspiration, and to his piety. He affirms, that "all things," and that without limitation or restriction, "were made by

him ;” that “without him was not any thing made that was made ;” which clearly means, that there is no created object which*had not Christ for its Creator ; an assertion which contains a revelation of a most important and fundamental doctrine. If, however, it be taken in the Socinian sense, it is a pitiful truism, asserting that Christ did nothing in establishing his religion which he did not do ; for to this effect their Version itself expresses it : “All things were done by him, and without him was not any thing done that hath been done ;” or, as they might have rendered it, to make the folly still more manifest, “Without him was not any thing done that was done by him, or which he himself did.” Unfortunately, however, for the notion of arranging or regulating the new dispensation, the Apostle adds a full confirmation of his former doctrine, that the physical creation was the result of the power of the divine Word, by asserting, that “the world was made by him ;”* that world into which he came as “the light ;” that world in which he was when he was made flesh ; that world which “knew him not.” It matters nothing to the argument, whether “the world” be understood of men or of the material world ; on either supposition it “was made by him,” and the creation was, therefore, physical. In neither case could the creation be a moral one, for the material world is incapable of a moral renewal ; and the world which “knew not” Christ, if understood of men, was not renewed, but unregenerated ; or he would have been “known,” that is, acknowledged, by them.

Another passage, equally incapable of being referred to any but a physical creation, is found in Hebrews i. 2 : “By whom also he made the worlds.” “God,” says the Apostle, “hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things ;” and then he proceeds to give further information of the nature and dignity of the Personage thus denominated “Son” and “Heir ;” and his very first declaration concerning him, in this exposition of his character, in order to prove him greater than angels, who are the greatest of all created beings, is that “by him also God made the

* “The world was *enlightened* by him,” says the new Version ; which perfectly gratuitous rendering has been before adverted to.

worlds." Two methods have been resorted to, in order to ward off the force of this decisive testimony as to the Deity of Christ, grounded upon his creative acts. The first is, to render the words, "for whom he made the worlds;" thus referring creation immediately to the Father, and making the preposition *δια*, with a genitive case, signify the final cause, the reason or end, for which the worlds were created. Were this even allowed, it would be a strange doctrine to assert, that for a mere man, for the exercise of the ministry of a mere man, as Christ is taken to be upon the Socinian hypothesis, "the worlds," the whole visible creation, with its various orders of intellectual beings, were created. This is a position almost as much opposed to that corrupt hypothesis as is the orthodox doctrine itself; and is another instance in proof that difficulties are multiplied, rather than lessened, by departing from the obvious sense of Scripture. But no example is found, in the whole New Testament, of the use of *δια* with a genitive to express the final cause; and, in the very next verse, St. Paul uses the same construction to express the efficient cause: "When he had by himself purged our sins." "This interpretation," says Whitby, justly, "is contrary to the rule of all grammarians; contrary to the exposition of all the Greek Fathers, and also without example in the New Testament."

The second resource, therefore, is to understand "the worlds," *τοὺς αἰῶνας*, in the literal import of the phrase, for "the ages," or the Gospel dispensation. But "*οἱ αἰῶνες*," absolutely put, doth never signify the church, or evangelical state; nor doth the Scripture ever speak of the world to come in the plural, but in the singular number only."* The phrase *οἱ αἰῶνες* was adopted either as equivalent to the Jewish division of the whole creation into three parts,—this lower world, the region of the stars, and the third heaven, the residence of God and his angels; or as expressive of the duration of the world, extending through an indefinite number of ages, and standing opposed to the short life of its inhabitants. "*Αἰων*, *primè* 'longum tempus,' *postea* 'eternitatem,' *apud Scriptores*

* Whitby.

*N. T. vero κόσμος, 'mundum,' significat, ex Hebraismo, ubi עולם et עולמים de mundo accipitur, quia mundus post tot generationes hominum perpetuè durat.** The Apostle, in writing to the Hebrews, used, therefore, a mode of expression which was not only familiar to them, but which they could not but understand of the natural creation. This, however, is put out of all doubt, by the use of the same phrase in the eleventh chapter,—“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things that do appear;” words which can only be understood of the physical creation. Another consideration, that takes the declaration, “by whom also he made the worlds,” out of the reach of all the captious and puerile criticism on which we have remarked, is, that, in the close of the chapter, the Apostle reiterates the doctrine of the creation of the world by Jesus Christ: “But unto the Son he saith,” not only, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,” but, “Thou, Lord,” Jehovah, “in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands;” words to which the perverted adroitness of heretics has been able to affix no meaning, when taken in any other sense than as addressed to Christ; and which will for ever attach to him, on the authority of inspiration, the title of “Jehovah,” and array him in all the majesty of creative power and glory. It is, indeed, a very conclusive argument in favour of the three great points of Christian doctrine, as comprehended in the orthodox faith, that it is impossible to interpret this celebrated chapter, according to any fair rule of natural and customary interpretation, without admitting that Christ is God, the divine Son of God, and the Mediator. The last is indicated by his being the medium through whom, in these last days, the will of God is communicated to mankind,—“God hath spoken” by him; and by his being “anointed” Priest and King, “above his fellows.” The second is expressed both by his title, “the Son,” and by the superiority which, in virtue of that name, he has above angels, and the

* Rosenmüller.

worship which, as the Son, they are enjoined to pay to him. He is also called "God;" and this term is fixed in its highest import, by his being declared "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person," and by the creative acts which are ascribed to him; whilst his character of Son, as being of the Father, is still preserved by the two metaphors of "brightness" and "image," and by the expression, "God, even thy God." On these principles only is the Apostle intelligible; on any other, the whole chapter is incapable of consistent exposition.

The only additional passage which it is necessary to produce, in order to show that Christ is the Creator of all things, and that the creation of which he is the Author is not a moral, but a physical, creation; not the framing of the Christian dispensation, but the forming of the whole universe of creatures out of nothing; is Colossians i. 15—17: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: All things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." The Socinians interpret this of "that great change which was introduced into the moral world, and particularly into the relative situation of Jews and Gentiles, by the dispensation of the Gospel."* But,

1. The Apostle introduces this passage as a reason why we have "redemption through his blood;" (verse 14;) why, in other words, the death of Christ was efficacious; and obviously attributes this efficacy to the dignity of his nature. This is the scope of his argument. 2. He therefore affirms him to be "the image," *εἰκων*, the exact representation or resemblance, of the invisible God; which, when compared with Heb. i. 3, "who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," shows that the Apostle uses the word in a sense in which it is not applicable to any human or angelic being,—"the first-born of every creature;" or, more

* Improved Version.

literally, "the first-born of the whole creation." The Arians have taken this in the sense of the "first-made creature;" but this is refuted by the term itself, which is not "first-made," but "first-born;" and by the following verse, which proves him to be first-born, "for," or "because," *οτι*, "by him were all things created." As to the date of his being, he was before all created things; for they were created by him: As to the manner of his being, he was by generation, not creation. The Apostle does not say, that he was created the first of all creatures, but that he was born before them; * a plain allusion to the generation of the Son before time began, and before creatures existed. Wolf has also shown, that, amongst the Jews, Jehovah is sometimes called the *primogenitum mundi*, "the first-born of the world," because they attributed the creation of the world to the Logos, the Word of the Lord, the ostensible Jehovah of the Old Testament, whom certainly they never meant to include among the creatures; and that they called him also the Son of God. It was, then, in perfect accordance with the theological language of the Jews themselves, that the Apostle calls our Lord "the first-born of the whole creation."

The Arian interpretation, which made the first-made creature the creator of the rest, is thus destroyed. The Socinian notion is as manifestly absurd. If the creation here be the new dispensation, the Christian church, then, to call Christ "the first-born of this creation," is to make the Apostle say that Christ was the first-made member of the Christian church; and the reason given for this is, that he made or constituted the church! If by this they mean simply that he was the Author of Christianity, we have again a puerile truism put into the lips of the Apostle. If they mean that the Apostle declares that Christ was the first Christian, it is difficult to conceive how this can be gravely affirmed as a comment on the words; if any thing else, it is impossible to discover any connexion in the argument, that is, between the proposition that "Christ is the first-born of the whole creation," and the proof of it which is

* Vide Wolfius *in loc.*

adduced, that “by him were all things created.” The annotators on the new Version say, “It is plain from comparing this passage with verse 18, (where Christ is called ‘the first-born from the dead,’) that Christ is called ‘the first-born of the whole creation,’ because he is the first who was raised from the dead to an immortal life.” This is far from being “plain ;” but it is plain that, in these two verses, the Apostle speaks of Christ in two different states, first, in his state “before all things,” and as the Sustainer of all things ; and then in his state in the church, (verse 18,) in which is added to the former particulars respecting him, that “he is the Head of the body the church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead.” Again : If in verses 15—17 the Apostle is speaking of what Christ is in and to the church, under the figure of a creation of all things in heaven and in earth, when he drops the figure and teaches us that Christ is the Head of the church, the first-born from the dead, he uses a mere tautology ; nor is there any apparent reason why he should not, in the same plain terms, have stated his proposition at once, without resorting to expressions which, in this view, would be far-fetched and delusive. In the church he was Head, and “the first-born from the dead,” the only one who ever rose to die no more, and who gives an immortal life to those he quickens : But, before the church existed, or he himself became incarnate, “before all things,” says the Apostle, he was the “first-born of the whole creation ;” that is, as the Fathers understood it, he was born or begotten before every creature. But the very terms of the text are an abundant refutation of the notion, “that the creation here mentioned is not the creation of natural substances.” The things created are said to be “all things in heaven and upon the earth ;” and, lest the invisible spirits in the heaven should be thought to be excluded, the Apostle adds, “things visible and things invisible ;” and, lest the invisible things should be understood of inferior angels or spiritual beings, and lest the high and glorious beings who “excel in strength,” and are in Scripture invested with other elevated properties, should be suspected to be exceptions, the Apostle becomes still more particular, and adds, whether “thrones, or

dominions, or principalities, or powers,"—terms by which the Jews expressed the different orders of angels, and which are used in that sense by this Apostle, in Ephesians i. 21. It is a shameless criticism of the authors of the new Version, and shows how hardly they were pushed by this decisive passage, that "the Apostle does not here specify things themselves, namely, celestial and terrestrial substances, but merely states of things, namely, thrones, dominions, &c., which are only ranks and orders of beings in the rational and moral world." Was it, then, forgotten, that before St. Paul speaks of things in rank and order, he speaks of all things collectively which are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible? If so, he then, unquestionably, speaks of "things themselves," or he speaks of nothing. Nor is it true, that, in the enumeration of thrones, dominions, &c., he speaks of the creation of ranks and orders. He does not speak "merely of states of things, but of things in states; he does not say that Christ created thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers, which would have been more to their purpose, but that he created all things, 'whether' εἴτε, 'they be thrones,' &c." The Apostle adds, that all things were created by him, and for him, as the end; which could not be said of Christ, even if a moral creation were intended, since, on the Socinian hypothesis that he is a mere man, a Prophet of God, he is but the instrument of restoring man to obedience and subjection, for the glory and in accomplishment of the purposes of God. But how is the whole of this description to be made applicable to a figurative creation, to the moral restoration of lapsed beings? It is as plainly historical as the words of Moses, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." "Things visible" and "things on earth" comprise, of course, all those objects which, being neither sensible nor rational, are incapable of moral regeneration; whilst "things in heaven" and "things invisible" comprise the angels which never sinned, and who need no repentance and no renewal. Such are those gross perversions of the word of God which this heresy induces; and with such indelible evidence is the Divinity of our Lord declared by his acts of power and glory, as the universal

Creator. The admirable observations of Bishop Pearson may, properly, conclude what has been said on this important passage of inspired writ :—

“ In these words our Saviour is expressly styled the ‘first-born of every creature,’ that is, begotten by God, as ‘the Son of his love,’ antecedently to all other emanations, before any thing proceeded from him, or was framed and created by him. And that precedency is presently proved by this undeniable argument, that all other emanations or productions come from him, and whatsoever received its being by creation was by him created ; which assertion is delivered in the most proper, full, and frequent expressions imaginable : First, in the plain language of Moses, as most consonant to his description : ‘For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth ;’ signifying thereby, that he speaketh of the same creation. Secondly, by a division which Moses never used, as describing the production only of corporeal substances : Lest, therefore, those immaterial beings might seem exempted from the Son’s creation, because omitted in Moses’s description, he addeth ‘visible and invisible ;’ and lest, in that invisible world, among the many degrees of celestial hierarchy, any order might seem exempted from an essential dependence on him, he nameth those which are of greatest eminence, ‘whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers,’ and under them comprehendeth all the rest. Nor doth it yet suffice, thus to extend the object of his power, by asserting all things to be made by him, except it be so understood as to acknowledge the sovereignty of his person, and the authority of his action. For, lest we should conceive the Son of God framing the world as a mere instrumental cause which worketh by and for another, he sheweth him as well the final as the efficient cause ; for ‘all things were created by him and for him.’ Lastly : Whereas all things first receive their being by creation, and, when they have received it, continue in the same by virtue of God’s conservation, ‘in whom we live, and move, and have our being ;’ lest in any thing we should not depend immediately upon the Son of God, he is described as the Conserver, as well as the Creator, for ‘he is before all

things, and by him all things consist.' If, then, we consider these two latter verses by themselves, we cannot deny but they are a most complete description of the Creator of the world; and if they were spoken of God the Father, could be no way injurious to his majesty, who is no where more plainly or fully set forth unto us as the Maker of the world."

But, besides the great act of creating, our Lord himself professes to do other acts, which are peculiar to God; and such acts are also attributed to him by his inspired Apostles. His preserving of all things made by him has already been mentioned, which implies not only a divine power, but also ubiquity, since he must be present to all things, in order to their constant conservation. The final destruction of the whole frame of material nature is also as expressly attributed to him as its creation: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands; these shall perish, but thou remainest; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed." Here omnipotent Power is seen changing, and removing, and taking away the vast universe of material things, with the same ease as it was spoken into being and at first disposed into order. Generally, too, our Lord claims to perform the works of his Father: "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works." Should this, even, be restrained to the working of miracles, the argument remains the same. No Prophet, no Apostle, ever used such language in speaking of his miraculous gifts. Here Christ declares that he performs the works of his Father; not merely that the Father worked by him, but that he himself did the works of God; which can only mean works proper or peculiar to God, and which a divine Power only could effect.* So the Jews understood him; for, upon this declaration, "they sought again to take him." That this power of working miracles was in him an original power, appears also

* *Si non facio ea ipsa divina opera, quæ Pater meus facit; si quæ facio, non habent divinæ virtutis specimen.*—ROSENMULLER. *Opera Patris mei, id est, quæ Patri, sive Deo, sunt propria; quæ a nemine alio fieri queunt.*—POLI *Synopsis.*

from his bestowing that power upon his disciples : “ Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents, and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy ; and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” (Luke x. 19.) “ And he gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.” (Luke ix. 1.) Their miracles were, therefore, to be performed in his name, by which the power of effecting them was expressly reserved to him. “ In my name shall they cast out devils ;” “ And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong.”

The manner in which our Lord promises the Holy Spirit is further in proof, that he performs acts peculiar to the God-head. He speaks of “ sending the Spirit,” in the language of one who had an original right and an inherent power to bestow that wondrous gift which was to impart miraculous energies, and heavenly wisdom, comfort, and purity, to human minds. Does the Father send the Spirit ? the Son claims the same power,—“ The Comforter, whom I will send unto you.” The Spirit is, on this account, called “ the Spirit of Christ,” and “ the Spirit of God.” Thus the giving of the Spirit is indifferently ascribed to the Son and to the Father ; but when that gift is mediately bestowed by the Apostles, no such language is assumed by them ; they pray to Christ, and to the Father, in his name, and he, their exalted Master, sheds forth the blessing : “ Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.”

Another of the unquestionably peculiar acts of God, is the forgiveness of sins. In the manifest reason of the thing, no one can forgive but the party offended ; and, as sin is the transgression of the law of God, he alone is the offended party, and he only, therefore, can forgive. Mediately, others may declare his pardoning acts, or the conditions on which he determines to forgive ; but, authoritatively, there can be no actual forgiveness of sins against God but by God himself. But Christ forgives sin authoritatively ; and he is, therefore, God. One passage is all that is necessary to prove this : “ He

said to the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." The Scribes, who were present, understood that he did this authoritatively, and assumed, in this case, the rights of Divinity. They therefore said among themselves, "This man blasphemeth." What, then, is the conduct of our Lord? Does he admit that he only ministerially declared, in consequence of some revelation, that God had forgiven the sins of the paralytic? On the contrary, he works a miracle to prove to them, that the very right which they disputed was vested in him, that he had this authority: "But, that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, then saith he to the sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thine own house."

Such were the acts performed by our Saviour, in the days of his sojourn on earth; and which he is represented, by his inspired Apostles, to be still constantly performing, or as having the power to perform. If any creature is capable of doing the same mighty works, then is all distinction between created finite natures and the uncreated Infinite destroyed. If such a distinction, in fact, exists; if neither creation, preservation, nor salvation, be possible to a mere creature, we have seen that they are possible to Christ, because he actually creates, preserves, and saves; and the inevitable conclusion is, that he is very God.

CHAPTER XV.

Divine Worship paid to Christ.

FROM Christ's own acts we may pass to those of his disciples, and particularly to one which unequivocally marks their opinion respecting his Divinity: They worship him as a divine Person, and they enjoin this also upon Christians to the end of time. If Christ, therefore, is not God, the Apostles were idolaters, and Christianity is a system of impiety. This is a point so important as to demand a close investigation.

The fact that divine worship was paid to Christ by his disciples must be first established. Instances of falling down at the feet of Jesus and worshipping him, are so frequent in the Gospel, that it is not necessary to select the instances which are so familiar; and, though we allow that the word *προσκυνειν* is sometimes used to express that lowly reverence with which, in the east, it has been always customary to salute persons considered as greatly superior, and especially rulers and Sovereigns, it is yet the same word which, in a great number of instances, is used to express the worship of the supreme God. We are, then, to collect the intention of the act of worship, whether designed as a token of profound civil respect, or of real and divine adoration, from the circumstances of the instances on record. When a leper comes and "worships" Christ, professing to believe that he had the power of healing diseases, and that in himself, which power he could exercise at his will; all which he expresses by saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean;" we see a Jew retaining that faith of the Jewish church in its purity which had been corrupted among so many of his nation, that the Messiah was to be a divine Person; and, viewing our Lord under that character, he regarded his miraculous powers as original and personal, and so hesitated not to worship him. Here, then,

is a case in which the circumstances clearly show, that the worship was religious and supreme. When the man who had been cured of blindness by Jesus, and who had defended his prophetic character before the council, before he knew that he had a higher character than that of a Prophet, was met in private by Jesus, and instructed in the additional fact, that he was "the Son of God," he worshipped him. "Jesus heard, that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe; and he worshipped him:"—"Worshipped him," he it observed, under his character "Son of God;" a title which, we have already seen, was regarded by the Jews as implying actual Divinity, and which the man understood to raise Jesus far above the rank of a mere Prophet. The worship paid by this man must, therefore, in its intention, have been supreme; for it was offered to an acknowledged divine Person, the Son of God. When the disciples, fully yielding to the demonstration of our Lord's Messiahship, arising out of a series of splendid miracles, recognised him also under his personal character, "they came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God." (Matt. xiv. 33.) When Peter, upon the miraculous draught of fishes, "fell at his feet," and said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," these expressions themselves mark as strongly the awe and apprehension which is produced in the breast of a sinful man, when he feels himself in the presence of Divinity itself, as when Isaiah exclaims, in his vision of the divine glory, "Wo is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: For mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts."

The circumstances, then, which accompany these instances make it evident, that the worship here paid to our Lord was of the highest order; and they will serve to explain several other cases in the Gospels, similar in the act, though not accompanied with illustrative circumstances so explicit. But

there is one general consideration of importance which applies to them all. Such acts of lowly prostration as are called "worship" were chiefly paid to civil Governors. Now our Lord cautiously avoided giving the least sanction to the notion that he had any civil pretensions, and that his object was to make himself a King. It would therefore have been a marked inconsistency to suffer himself to be saluted with the homage of prostration proper to civil Governors, and which, indeed, was not always, in Judea, rendered to them. He did not receive this homage, then, under the character of a civil ruler or Sovereign; and under what character could he receive it? Not in compliance with the haughty custom of the Jewish Rabbies, who exacted great external reverence from their disciples; for he sharply reprov'd their haughtiness and love of adulation and honour: Not as a simple Teacher of religion; for his Apostles might then have imitated his example, since, upon the Socinian hypothesis of his mere manhood, they, when they had collected disciples and founded churches, had as clear a right to this distinction as he himself, had it only been one of appropriate and common courtesy sanctioned by their Master. But when do we read of their receiving worship, without spurning it on the very ground that "they were men of like passions" with others? How, then, is it to be accounted for, that our Lord never forbade or discouraged this practice as to himself, or even shunned it? In no other way than that he was conscious of his natural right to the homage thus paid; and that he accepted it as the expression of a faith which, though sometimes wavering, because of the obscurity which darkened the minds of his followers, (and which even his own conduct, mysterious as it necessarily was, till "he openly showed himself" after his passion, tended to produce,) yet sometimes pierced through the cloud, and saw and acknowledged, in the Word made flesh, "the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

But to proceed with instances of worship subsequent to our Lord's resurrection and ascension: "He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven; and they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy." (Luke xxiv.

51, 52.) Here the act must necessarily have been one of divine adoration, since it was performed after "he was parted from them," and cannot be resolved into the customary token of personal respect paid to superiors. This was always done in the presence of the superior; never, by the Jews, in his absence.

When the Apostles were assembled to fill up the place of Judas, the lots being prepared, they pray, "Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these men thou hast chosen." That this prayer is addressed to Christ, is clear, from its being his special prerogative to choose his own disciples, who, therefore, styled themselves "Apostles," not of the Father, but "of Jesus Christ." Here, then, is a direct act of worship, because an act of prayer; and our Lord is addressed as he who "knows the hearts of all men." Nor is this more than he himself claims in the Revelation: "And all the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and the heart."

When Stephen, the protomartyr, was stoned, the writer of the Acts of the Apostles records two instances of prayer offered to our Lord by this man "full of the Holy Ghost," and therefore, according to this declaration, under plenary inspiration. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!" In the former, he acknowledges Christ to be the Disposer of the eternal states of men; in the latter, he acknowledges him to be the Governor and Judge of men, having power to remit, pass by, or visit, their sins. All these are manifestly divine acts, which sufficiently show, that St. Stephen addressed his prayers to Christ as God. The note from Lindsay, inserted in the Socinian Version, shows the manner in which the Socinians attempt to evade this instance of direct prayer being offered by the Apostles to Christ: "This address of Stephen to Jesus, when he actually saw him, does not authorize us to offer prayers to him now he is invisible." And this is seriously alleged. How does the circumstance of an object of prayer and of religious worship being seen or unseen alter the case? May a man, when seen, be an object of prayer, to whom, unseen, it would be unlawful

to pray? The Papists, if this were true, would find a new refutation of their practice of invoking dead saints furnished by the Socinians. Were they alive and seen, prayer to them would be lawful; but, now they are invisible, it is idolatry. Even image-worship would derive, from this casuistry, a sort of apology, as the seen image is, at least, the visible representation of the invisible saint or angel. But let the case be put fairly: Suppose a dying person to pray to a man, visible and near his bed, "Lord, receive my spirit! Lord, lay not sin to the charge of my enemies!" Who sees not that this would be gross idolatry? And yet, if Jesus be a mere man, the idolatry is the same, though that man be in heaven. It will not alter the case for the Socinian to say, that "the man Jesus is exalted to great dignity and rule in the invisible world;" for he is, after all, on their showing, but a servant; not a dispenser of the eternal states of men, not an avenger or a passer-by of sin, in his own right, that he should lay sin to the charge of any one, or not lay it, as he might be desired to do by a disciple; and if St. Stephen had these views of him, he would not, surely, have asked of a servant what a servant had no power to grant. Indeed, the Socinians themselves give up the point, by denying that Christ is lawfully the object of prayer. There, however, he is prayed to, beyond all controversy; and his right and power to dispose of the disembodied spirits of men is as much recognised in the invocation of the dying Stephen, as the same right and power in the Father, in the last prayer of our Lord himself: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

To Dr. Priestley's objection, that this is an inconsiderable instance, and is to be regarded as a mere ejaculation, Bishop Horsley forcibly replies: "St. Stephen's short ejaculatory address you had not forgotten; but you say, 'It is very inconsiderable.' But, Sir, why is it inconsiderable? Is it because it was only an ejaculation? Ejaculations are often prayers of the most fervid kind; the most expressive of self-abasement and adoration. Is it for its brevity that it is inconsiderable? What, then, is the precise length of words which is requisite to make a prayer an act of worship? Was this petition pre-

ferred on an occasion of distress, on which a Divinity might be naturally invoked? Was it a petition for a succour which none but a Divinity could grant? If this was the case, it was surely an act of worship. Is the situation of the worshipper the circumstance which, in your judgment, Sir, lessens the authority of his example? You suppose, perhaps, some consternation of his faculties, arising from distress and fear. The history justifies no such supposition. It describes the utterance of the final prayer, as a deliberate act of one who knew his situation, and possessed his understanding. After praying for himself, he kneels down to pray for his persecutors; and such was the composure with which he died, although the manner of his death was the most tumultuous and terrifying, that, as if he had expired quietly upon his bed, the sacred historian says, that ‘he fell asleep.’ If, therefore, you would insinuate, that St. Stephen was not himself, when he sent forth this ‘short ejaculatory address to Christ,’ the history refutes you. If he was himself, you cannot justify his prayer to Christ, while you deny that Christ is God, upon any principle that might not equally justify you or me in praying to the blessed Stephen. If St. Stephen, in the full possession of his faculties, prayed to him who is no God, why do we reproach the Romanist, when he chants the litany of his saints?”

St. Paul, also, in that affliction which he metaphorically describes by “a thorn in the flesh,” “sought the Lord thrice” that it might depart from him; and the answer shows that “the Lord,” to whom he addressed his prayer, was Christ; for he adds, “And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness: Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me;” clearly signifying the power of him who had said, in answer to his prayer, “My strength, *δυναμις*, ‘power,’ is made perfect in weakness.”

St. Paul also prays to Christ, conjointly with the Father, in behalf of the Thessalonians: “Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good

work." (2 Thess. ii. 16, 17.) In like manner he invokes our Lord to grant his spiritual presence to Timothy: "The Lord Jesus be with thy spirit." (2 Tim. iv. 22.) The invoking of Christ is, indeed, adduced by St. Paul as a distinctive characteristic of Christians, so that among all the primitive churches this practice must have been universal: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." (1 Cor. i. 2.) "It appears, from the expression here and elsewhere used, that to invoke the name of our Lord Jesus Christ was a practice characterizing and distinguishing Christians from infidels."* Thus St. Paul is said, before his conversion, to have had "authority from the Chief Priests to bind all that call upon thy name." The Socinian criticism is, that the phrase *ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τὸ ὄνομα* may be translated, either "to call on the name," or "to be called by the name;" and they therefore render 1 Corinthians i. 2, "all that are called by the name of Jesus Christ." If, however, all that can be said in favour of this rendering is, that the verb may be rendered passively, how is it that they choose to render it actively in all places except where their system is to be served? This itself is suspicious. But it is not necessary to produce the refutations of this criticism given by several of their learned opponents, who have shown that the verb, followed by an accusative case, usually, if not constantly, is used, in its active signification, "to call upon," "to invoke." One passage is sufficient to prove both the active signification of the phrase, when thus applied, and also that to call upon the name of Christ is an act of the highest worship: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. x. 13.) This is quoted from the Prophet Joel. St. Peter, in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, makes use of it as a prophecy of Christ; and the argument of St. Paul imperatively requires us also to understand it of him. Now this prophecy proves, that the phrase in question is used for invocation, since it is

* Dr. Benson.

not true that whosoever shall be called by the name of the Lord will be saved, but those only who rightly call upon it ; it proves also, that the calling upon the name of the Lord, here mentioned, is a religious act, for it is calling upon the name of Jehovah, the word used by the Prophet Joel, the consequence of which act of faith and worship is salvation. "This text, indeed, presents us with a double argument in favour of our Lord's Divinity. First, It applies to him what, by the Prophet Joel, is spoken of Jehovah. Secondly, It affirms him to be the object of religious adoration. Either of these particulars does, indeed, imply the other ; for if he be Jehovah, he must be the object of religious adoration ; and if he be the object of religious adoration, he must be Jehovah."*

In the Revelation, too, we find St. John worshipping Christ, "falling at his feet as one dead." St. Paul also declares, "that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow ;" which, in Scripture language, signifies an act of religious worship : "For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

But this homage and adoration of Christ is not confined to men ; it is practised among heavenly beings : "And again, when he bringeth in the First-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." For the purpose of evading the force of these words, the Socinians, in their Version, have chosen the absurdity of rendering *αγγελου* throughout this chapter, by "messengers ;" but in the next chapter, as though the subject would, by that time, be out of the reader's mind, they return to the common version, "angels." Thus they make the "spirits and flames of fire," or, as they render it, "winds and flames of lightning," to be the ancient Prophets or messengers, not angels ; and of these same Prophets and messengers, who lived several thousand years ago, their translation affirms, that they "are sent forth to minister for them who shall be," in future ! "heirs of salvation." The absurdity is so apparent, that it is scarcely

* Bishop Horne.

necessary to add, that, in the New Testament, though “angel” is sometimes applied to men, yet “angels of God” is a phrase never used but to express an order of heavenly intelligences.

If, however, either Prophets or angels were commanded to worship Christ, his Divinity would be equally proved; and therefore the note on this text in the new Version teaches, that “to worship Christ” here means to acknowledge him as their superior; and urges that the text is cited from the LXX., Deuteronomy xxxii. 43, “where it is spoken of the Hebrew nation, and therefore cannot be understood of religious worship.” But whoever will turn to the LXX., will see that it is not the Hebrew nation, but Jehovah, who is exhibited in that passage as the object of worship; and if, therefore, the text were cited from the Book of Deuteronomy, and the genuineness of the passage in the LXX. were allowed, (for it is not in the present Hebrew text,) it would only afford another proof, that, in the mind of the Apostles, the Jehovah of the Old Testament and the Christ of the New are the same Being, and that equal worship is due to him under both titles. We have, however, an unquestioned text in the Old Testament, Psalm xcvi. 7, from which the quotation is obviously made; where, in the Hebrew, it is, “Worship him, all ye gods,” a probable ellipsis for “the angels of the Aleim;” for the LXX. use the word “angels.” This psalm the Apostle, therefore, understood of Christ, and in this the old Jewish interpreters agree with him; * and, though he is not mentioned in it by any of his usual Old-Testament titles, except that of Jehovah, it clearly predicts the overthrow of idolatry by the introduction of the kingdom of this Jehovah. It follows, then, that, as idolatry was not overthrown by Judaism, but by the kingdom of Christ, it is Christ, as the Head and Author of this kingdom, of whom the Psalmist speaks, and whom he sees receiving the worship of the angels of God upon its introduction and establishment. This, also, agrees with the words by which the

* *Psalmos omnes a xciii. ad ci. in se continere mysterium Messie, dixit David Kimchi.*—ROSENMULLER.

Apostle introduces the quotation: "And again, when he bringeth in the First-begotten into the world," the habitable world; which intimate that it was upon some solemn occasion, when engaged in some solemn act, that the angels were commanded to worship him, and this act is represented in the ninety-seventh psalm as the establishment of his kingdom. Bishop Horsley's remarks on this psalm are equally just and beautiful:—

"That Jehovah's kingdom, in some sense or other, is the subject of this divine song, cannot be made a question; for thus it opens,—‘Jehovah reigneth.’ The psalm, therefore, must be understood either of God's natural kingdom over his whole creation; of his particular kingdom over the Jews his chosen people; or of that kingdom which is called in the New Testament, ‘the kingdom of heaven,’ ‘the kingdom of God,’ or ‘the kingdom of Christ.’ For of any other kingdom besides these three, man never heard or read. God's peculiar kingdom over the Jews cannot be the subject of this psalm, because all nations of the earth are called upon to rejoice in the acknowledgment of this great truth, ‘Jehovah reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the many isles be glad thereof.’ The ‘many isles’ are the various regions of the habitable world.

"The same consideration, that Jehovah's kingdom is mentioned as a subject of general thanksgiving, proves that God's universal dominion over his whole creation cannot be the kingdom in the Prophet's mind: For in this kingdom a great majority of the ancient world, the idolaters, were considered, not as subjects who might rejoice in the glory of their Monarch, but as rebels who had every thing to fear from his just resentment.

"It remains, therefore, that Christ's kingdom is that kingdom of Jehovah which the inspired poet celebrates as the occasion of universal joy. And this will further appear by the sequel of the song. After four verses, in which the transcendent glory, the irresistible power, and inscrutable perfection of the Lord, who to the joy of all nations reigneth, are painted in poetical images, taken partly from the awful scene

on Sinai which accompanied the delivery of the law, partly from other manifestations of God's presence with the Israelites in their journey through the wilderness, he proceeds, in the sixth verse, 'The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.' We read in the nineteenth psalm, that 'the heavens declare the glory of God.' And the glory of God, the power and the intelligence of the Creator, is indeed visibly declared in the fabric of the material world. But I cannot see how the structure of the heavens can demonstrate the righteousness of God. Wisdom and power may be displayed in the contrivance of an inanimate machine ; but righteousness cannot appear in the arrangement of the parts, or the direction of the motions, of lifeless matter. The heavens, therefore, in their external structure, cannot declare their Maker's righteousness. But the heavens, in another sense, attested the righteousness of Christ when the voice from heaven declared him the beloved Son of God, in whom the Father was well-pleased ; and when the preternatural darkness of the sun at the crucifixion, and other agonies of nature, drew that confession from the heathen Centurion who attended the execution, that the suffering Jesus was the Son of God. 'And all the people see his glory.' The word 'people,' in the singular, for the most part denotes God's chosen people, the Jewish nation, unless any other particular people happen to be the subject of discourse. But 'peoples,' in the plural, is put for all the other races of mankind, as distinct from the chosen people. The word here is in the plural form : 'And all the peoples see his glory.' But, when, or in what, did any of the peoples, the idolatrous nations, see the glory of God ? Literally they never saw his glory. The effulgence of the Shechinah never was displayed to them, except when it blazed forth upon the Egyptians to strike them with a panic ; or when the towering pillar of flame, which marshalled the Israelites in the wilderness, was seen by the inhabitants of Palestine and Arabia as a threatening meteor in their sky. Intellectually no idolaters ever saw the glory of God ; for they never acknowledged his power and Godhead : Had they thus seen his glory, they had ceased to be idolaters. But all the 'peoples,' by the preaching of the Gospel, saw the

glory of Christ. They saw it literally in the miracles performed by his Apostles ; they saw it spiritually when they perceived the purity of his precepts, when they acknowledged the truth of his doctrine, when they embraced the profession of Christianity, and owned Christ for their Saviour and their God. The Psalmist goes on : ‘ Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols. Worship him, all ye gods.’ In the original, this verse has not at all the form of a malediction, which it has acquired in our translation from the use of the strong word ‘ confounded.’ ‘ Let them be ashamed.’ This is the utmost that the Psalmist says. The prayer that they may be ashamed of their folly, and repent of it, is very different from an imprecation of confusion. But in truth the Psalmist rather seems to speak prophetically, without any thing either of prayer or imprecation : ‘ They shall be ashamed.’ Having seen the glory of Christ, they shall be ashamed of the idols, which in the times of ignorance they worshipped. In the eighth and ninth verses, looking forward to the times when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be come in, and the remnant of Israel shall turn to the Lord, he describes the daughter of Judah as rejoicing at the news of the mercy extended to the Gentile world, and exulting in the universal extent of Jehovah’s kingdom, and the general acknowledgment of his Godhead.”*

The argument of the Apostle is thus made clear : He proves Christ superior to angels, and therefore divine, because angels themselves are commanded to worship him.† Nor is this the only prophetic psalm in which the religious worship of Messiah is predicted. The seventy-second psalm, alone, is full of this doctrine : “ They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure.” “ All Kings shall worship” (or, fall down) “ before him ; all nations shall serve him.” “ Prayer shall be made ever for” (or to) “ him, and daily shall he be praised.”

Finally : As to the direct worship of Christ, the book of the

* Nine Sermons.

† *Ceterum rectè argumentatur Apostolus : Si angeli regem illum maximum adorare debent, ergò sunt illo inferiores.*—ROSENMULLER *in loc.*

Revelation, in its scenic representations, exhibits him as, equally with the Father, the object of the worship of angels and of glorified saints; and, in chapter v., places every creature in the universe, the inhabitants of hell only excepted, in prostrate adoration at his footstool: "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

To these instances are to be added all the doxologies to Christ, in common with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and all the benedictions made in his name in common with theirs; for all these are forms of worship. The first consist of ascriptions of equal and divine honours, with grateful recognitions of the Being addressed, as the Author of benefits received. The second are a solemn blessing of others in the name of God; and were derived from the practice of the Jewish Priests and the still older Patriarchs, who blessed others in the name of Jehovah, as his representatives.

Of the first, the following may be given, as a few out of many instances: "The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me to his heavenly kingdom; to whom be glory for ever and ever." (2 Tim. iv. 18.) "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; to him be glory both now and for ever. Amen." (2 Peter iii. 18.) "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (Rev. i. 5, 6.) "When we consider the great difference between these doxologies and the commendations but sparingly given in the Scriptures to mere men; the serious and reverential manner in which they are introduced; and the superlative praise they convey, so far surpassing what humanity can deserve, we cannot but suppose that the Being to whom they refer is really divine. The ascription of eternal glory and everlasting dominion, if addressed to any creature, however exalted, would

be idolatrous and profane.”* Of benedictions, the commencement and conclusion of several of the Epistles furnish instances, so regular in their form, as to make it clearly appear, that the Apostles and the Priests of the New Testament constantly blessed the people ministerially in the name of Christ, as one of the blessed Trinity. This consideration alone shows that the benedictions are not, as the Socinians would take them, to be considered as cursory expressions of good-will. “Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.” This, with little variation, is the common form of salutation; and the usual parting benediction is, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all;” or, more fully, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.” In answer to the Socinian perversion, that these are mere “wishes,” it has been well and wisely observed, that “this objection overlooks, or notices very slightly, the point on which the whole question turns,—the nature of the blessings sought, and the qualities which they imply in the Person as whose donation they are deliberately desired. These blessings are not of that kind which one creature is competent to bestow upon another. They refer to the judicial state of an accountable being before God, to the remission of moral offences, to the production and preservation of certain mental qualities which none can efficaciously and immediately give but He who holds the dominion of human minds and feelings, and to the enjoyments of supreme and endless felicity. They are grace, mercy, and peace. Grace, the free favour of the eternal Majesty to those who have forfeited every claim to it; such favour as, in its own nature, and in the contemplation of the supplicant, is the sole and effective cause of deliverance from the greatest evils, and acquisition of the greatest good. Mercy, the compassion of infinite Goodness, conferring its richest bestowments of holiness and happiness on the ruined, miserable, and helpless. Peace, the tranquil and delightful feeling which results from the rational hope of possessing these enjoyments. These are the

* Holden’s Testimonies.

highest blessings that omnipotent benevolence can give, or a dependent nature receive. To desire such blessings, either in the mode of direct address or in that of precatory wish, from any being who is not possessed of omnipotent goodness, would be, not 'innocent and proper,' but sinful and absurd in the highest degree. When, therefore, we find every Apostle whose Epistles are extant, pouring out his 'expressions of desire,' with the utmost simplicity and energy, for these blessings, as proceeding from 'our Lord Jesus Christ,' equally with 'God our Father,' we cannot but regard it as the just and necessary conclusion, that Christ and the Father are one in the perfection which originates the highest blessings, and in the honour due for the gift of those blessings."*

So clearly does the New Testament show that supreme worship was paid to Christ, as well as to the Father; and the practice obtained as a matter of course, as a matter quite undisputed in the primitive church, and has so continued, in all orthodox churches, to this day. Thus heathen writers represented the first Christians as worshippers of Christ; and, as for the practice of the primitive church, it is not necessary to quote passages from the Fathers, which are so well known, or so easily found in all books which treat on this subject. It is sufficient evidence of the practice, that when, in the fourth century, the Arians taught that our Lord was a super-angelic creature only, they departed not, in the instance of worship, from the homage paid to him in the universal church, but continued to adore Christ. On this ground the orthodox justly branded them with idolatry; and, in order to avoid the force of the charge, they invented those sophistical distinctions as to superior and inferior worship which the Papists, in later times, introduced, in order to excuse the worship of saints and angels. Even the old Socinians allowed Christ to be the object of religious adoration; so impossible was it, even for them, to oppose themselves all at once to the reproofing and condemning universal example of the church of Christ in all ages.

Having, then, established the fact of the worship of Christ

* Smith's Person of Christ.

by his immediate followers, whose precepts and example have, in this matter, been followed by all the faithful; let us consider the religious principles which the first disciples held, in order to determine whether they could have so worshipped Christ, unless his true Divinity had been, with them, a fundamental and universally-received doctrine. They were Jews; and Jews of an age in which their nation had long shaken off its idolatrous propensities, and which was distinguished by its zeal against all worship, or expressions of religious trust and hope, being directed, not only to false gods, (to idols,) but to creatures. The great principle of the law was, "Thou shalt have no other gods before" (or besides) "me." It was, therefore, commanded by Moses, "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and him shalt thou serve;" which words are quoted by our Lord in his temptation, when solicited to worship Satan, so as to prove that, to "fear" God, and to "serve" him, are expressions which signify "worship," and that all other beings but God are excluded from it: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." The argument, too, in the quotation, is, not that Satan had no right to receive worship, because he was an evil spirit; but that, whatever he might be, or whoever should make that claim, God only is to be worshipped. By this, also, we see that Christianity made no alteration in Judaism, as to the article of doctrine, for our Lord himself here adopts it as his own principle; he quotes it from the writings of Moses, and so transmitted it, on his own authority, to his followers. Accordingly, we find the Apostles teaching and practising this as a first principle of their religion. St. Paul (Rom. i. 21—25) charges the Heathen with not glorifying God when they knew him; and with worshipping and serving "the creature more than" (or besides) "the Creator, who is blessed for ever." "Wherein the Apostle," says Waterland, "plainly intimates, that the Creator only is to be served, and that the idolatry of the Heathens lay in their worshipping of the creature. He does not blame them for giving sovereign or absolute worship to creatures; (they could scarcely be so silly as to imagine there could be more than one supreme God;) but for giving any worship to them at all,

sovereign or inferior.”* Again: When he mentions it as one of the crimes of the Galatians, previous to their conversion to Christianity, that they “did service unto them which by nature were no gods,” he plainly intimates, that no one has a title to religious service but he who is by nature God; and, if so, he himself could not worship or do service to Christ, unless he believed him to possess a natural and essential Divinity.

The practice of the Apostles, too, was in strict accordance with this principle. Thus, when worship was offered to St. Peter, by Cornelius, who certainly did not take him to be God, he forbade it; so also Paul and Barnabas forbade it at Lystra, with expressions of horror, when offered to them. An eminent instance is recorded, also, of the exclusion of all creatures, however exalted, from this honour, in Revelation xix. 10, where the angel refuses to receive so much as the outward act of adoration, giving this rule and maxim upon it, “Worship God;” intimating thereby, that God only is to be worshipped; that all acts of religious worship are appropriated to God alone. He does not say, “Worship God, and whom God shall appoint to be worshipped,” as if he had appointed any besides God; nor, “Worship God with sovereign worship,” as if any inferior sort of worship was permitted to be paid to creatures; but simply, plainly, and briefly, “Worship God.”

From the known and avowed religious sentiments, then, of the Apostles, both as Jews and as Christians, as well as from their practice, it follows, that they could not pay religious worship to Christ, (a fact which has already been established,) except they had considered him as a divine Person, and themselves as bound, on that account, according to his own words, to honour the Son, even as they honoured the Father.

The Arians, it is true, as hinted above, devised the doctrine of supreme and inferior worship; and a similar distinction was maintained by Dr. Samuel Clarke, to reconcile the worship of Christ with his semi-Arianism. The same sophistical distinctions are resorted to by Roman Catholics, to vindicate the worship of angels, the Virgin Mary, and departed saints.

* Defence of Queries.

This distinction they express by *λατρεία* and *δουλεία*. St. Paul, however, and other sacred writers, and the early Fathers, certainly use these terms promiscuously and indifferently, so that the argument which is founded upon them, in defence of this inferior and subordinate worship, falls to the ground; and, as to all these distinctions of worship into ultimate or supreme, mediate or inferior, Dr. Waterland has most forcibly observed :—

“ 1. I can meet with nothing in Scripture to countenance those fine-spun notions. Prayer we often read of; but there is not a syllable about absolute and relative, supreme and inferior prayer. We are commanded to pray fervently and incessantly, but never sovereignly or absolutely, that I know of. We have no rules left us about raising or lowering our intentions, in proportion to the dignity of the objects. Some instructions to this purpose might have been highly useful; and it is very strange that, in a matter of so great importance, no directions should be given, either in Scripture, or, at least, in antiquity, how to regulate our intentions and meanings, with metaphysical exactness; so as to make our worship either high, higher, or highest of all, as occasion should require.

“ 2. But a greater objection against this doctrine is, that the whole tenor of Scripture runs counter to it. This may be understood, in part, from what I have observed above. To make it yet plainer, I shall take into consideration such acts and instances of worship as I find laid down in Scripture, whether under the old or new dispensation.

“ Sacrifice was one instance of worship required under the law; and it is said, ‘He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed.’ (Exod. xxii. 20.) Now suppose any person considering with himself that only absolute and sovereign sacrifice was appropriated to God, by this law, should have gone and sacrificed to other gods, and have been convicted of it before the Judges; the apology he must have made for it, I suppose, must have run thus: ‘Gentlemen, though I have sacrificed to other gods, yet, I hope, you’ll observe, that I did it not absolutely; I meant, not any absolute or supreme sacrifice, (which is all that

the law forbids,) but relative and inferior only. I regulated my intentions with all imaginable care; and my esteem with the most critical exactness: I considered the other gods, whom I sacrificed to, as inferior only, and infinitely so; reserving all sovereign sacrifice to the supreme God of Israel.' This, or the like apology, must, I presume, have brought off the criminal, with some applause for his acuteness, if your principles be true. Either you must allow this; or you must be content to say, that not only absolute supreme sacrifice, (if there be any sense in that phrase,) but all sacrifice was, by the law, appropriated to God only.

"Another instance of worship, is making of vows, religious vows. We find as little appearance of your famed distinction here, as in the former case. We read nothing of sovereign and inferior, absolute and relative, vows; that we should imagine supreme vows to be appropriate to God, inferior permitted to angels, or idols, or to any creature.

"Swearing is another instance much of the same kind with the foregoing. Swearing by God's name is a plain thing, and well understood; but if you tell us of sovereign and inferior swearing, according to the inward respect or intention you have, in proportion to the dignity of the person by whose name you swear, it must sound perfectly new to us. All swearing which comes short in its respects, or falls below sovereign, will, I am afraid, be little better than profaneness.

"Such being the case in respect of the acts of religious worship already mentioned, I am now to ask you, What is there so peculiar in the case of invocation and adoration, that they should not be thought of the same kind as the other? Why should not absolute and relative prayer and prostration appear as absurd as absolute and relative sacrifice, vows, oaths, or the like? They are acts and instances of religious worship, like the other, appropriated to God in the same manner, and by the same laws, and upon the same grounds and reasons. Well then, will you please to consider whether you have not begun at the wrong end, and committed an *υστερον προτερον* in your way of thinking? You imagine that acts of religious worship are to derive their signification and quality from the

intention and meaning of the worshippers ; whereas the very reverse of it is the truth. Their meaning and signification is fixed and determined by God himself ; and, therefore, we are never to use them with any other meaning, under peril of profaneness or idolatry. God has not left us at liberty to fix what sense we please upon religious worship, to render it high or low, absolute or relative, at discretion, supreme when offered to God, and if to others inferior ; as when to angels, or saints, or images, in suitable proportion. No ; religion was not made for metaphysical heads only ; such as might nicely distinguish the several degrees and elevations of respect and honour among many objects. The short and plain way, which (in pity to human infirmity, and to prevent confusion) it has pleased God to take with us, is to make all religious worship his own ; and so it is sovereign of course. This I take to be the true scriptural, as well as only reasonable, account of the object of worship. We need not concern ourselves (it is but vain to pretend to it) about determining the sense and meaning of religious worship. God himself has taken care of it ; and it is already fixed and determined to our hands. It means,—whether we will or no,—it means, by divine institution and appointment, the Divinity, the supremacy, the sovereignty of its object. To misapply those marks of dignity, those appropriate ensigns of divine majesty ; to compliment any creature with them, and thereby to make common what God has made proper, is to deify the works of God's hands, and to serve the creature instead of the Creator, ‘God blessed for ever.’ We have no occasion to talk of sovereign, absolute, prayers, and such other odd fancies : Prayer is an address to God, and does not admit of those novel distinctions. In short, then, here is no room left for your distinguishing between sovereign and inferior adoration. You must first prove, what you have hitherto presumed only and taken for granted, that you are at liberty to fix what meaning and signification you please to the acts of religious worship ; to make them high or low at discretion. This you will find a very difficult undertaking. Scripture is before-hand with you ; and, to fix it more, the concurring judgment of the earliest and best

Christian writers. All religious worship is hereby determined to be what you call absolute and sovereign. Inferior or relative worship appears now to be contradiction in sense, as it is novel in sound ; like an inferior or relative god.”*

These absurdities have, at length, been discovered by Socinians themselves, who, notwithstanding the authority of Socinus, have, at length, become, in this respect, consistent ; and, as they deny the Divinity of our Lord, so they refuse him worship, and do not “honour the Son as they honour the Father.” Their refusal to do so must be left to Him who hath said, “Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way;” but though they have not shunned error, they have, at least, by refusing all worship to Christ, escaped from hypocrisy.

Numerous other passages in the New Testament, in addition to those on which some remarks have been offered, might be adduced, in which the Divinity of our Lord is expressly taught, and which might be easily rescued from that discreditable and unscholarly criticism, by which Socinian writers have attempted to darken their evidence. It has, however, been my object rather to adduce passages which directly support the arguments, in the order in which they have been adduced, than to collect those which are more insulated. All of them ought, however, to be consulted by the careful student ; and, indeed, from many texts of this description, which appear to be but incidentally introduced, the evidence that the doctrine of the Godhead of Christ was taught by the Apostles is presented to us with this impressive circumstance,—that the inspired writers of the New Testament all along assume it as a point which was never, in that age, questioned by true Christians. It influenced, therefore, the turn of their language, and established a theological style among them, when speaking of Christ, which cannot possibly be reconciled to any hypothesis which excludes his essential Deity ; and which no honest, or even rational, men could have fallen into, unless

they had acknowledged and worshipped their Master as God.

Out of this numerous class of passages one will suffice for illustration :—

“ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus : Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation,” &c. (Phil. ii. 5—7.) Here the Apostle is recommending an humble and benevolent disposition to the Philippians ; and he enforces it, not, certainly, by considerations which themselves needed to be established by proof, or in which the Philippians had not been previously instructed, but in the most natural manner, and that only which a good writer could adopt, by what was already established, and received as true among them. It was already admitted by the Philippians, as an undoubted verity of the Christian religion, that, before Christ appeared “ in the form of a servant,” he existed “ in the form of God ;” and that before he was “ found in fashion as a man,” he was such a Being as could not think it “ robbery to be equal with God.” On these very grounds the example of Christ is proposed to his followers, and its imitation enforced upon them. This incidental and familiar manner of introducing so great a subject, clearly shows that the Divinity of Christ was a received doctrine ; but, though introduced incidentally, the terms employed by the Apostle are as strong and unequivocal as if he had undertaken formally to propose it. It is not necessary to show this by going through that formidable mass of verbal criticism which commentators, scholiasts, and other critics have accumulated around this passage. Happily as to this, as well as many other important texts which form the bases of the great *dogmata* of Christianity, much less is left to verbal criticism than many have supposed ; the various clauses, together with the connexion, so illustrate and guard the meaning as to fix their sense and make it obvious to the general reader. “ Who being,” or subsisting, “ in the form of God.” This is the first character of Christ’s exalted pre-existent state ; and it is adduced as the ground of a claim of which, for a season, he divested himself, and became, there-

fore, an illustrious example of humility and charity. The greatness of Christ is first laid down, then what he renounced of that which was due to his greatness, and, finally, the condition is introduced to which he stooped or humbled himself. "He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant." These are, obviously, the three great points in this celebrated text, to the consideration of which we are strictly bound by the Apostle's argument. Let each be briefly considered, and it will be seen how impossible it is to explain this passage in any way which does not imply our Lord's essential Divinity. To be, or to subsist, in "the form of God," is to be truly and essentially God. This may, indeed, be argued from the word *μορφῇ*, though some have confined its meaning to "external form" or "appearance." The Socinian exposition, that "the form of God" signifies his "power of working miracles," needs no other refutation than that the Apostle here speaks of what our Lord was before "he took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." The notion, too, of Whitby and others, who refer it to the visible glory of God, in which he appeared to the Patriarchs, is also disproved by this manifest consideration, that the phrase, "subsisting, *υπαρχων*, in the form of God," describes the permanent pre-existent state of Christ. He subsisted in the form of God, therefore, from eternity, and, consequently, before he made any visibly glorious manifestations of himself to the Patriarchs; nor, as God is invisible and immaterial, and, consequently, has no likeness of figure, could our Lord, in their sense, subsist in the form or appearance of God. If, indeed, "form" means "likeness," it must be intellectual likeness; and, therefore, to subsist "in the form of God" is to be God, for he could not be the likeness of God, or, as the Apostle has it in the Hebrews, the "express image" or character "of his person," without being God; for how could he be expressly like, or expressly resemble, omnipotence, or have the appearance of it, if he were not himself almighty; or of omniscience, if not himself all-knowing? Let us, then, allow that *μορφῇ*, in its leading sense, has the signification of

“form,” “shape,” “image,” and “similitude ;”^{*} yet this can only be applied to the divine Being figuratively. He has no sensible form, no appearance ; and nothing can be in this form or image, therefore, but what has the same essential properties and perfections. *Sed age*, says Elsner, *largiamur Soci-nianis μορφήν Θεῶν speciem et imaginem Dei esse, tamen valido inde argumento docebimus ; Deum esse natura qui in forma et imagine Dei existeret ; nisi Deum personatum, et commentitium, qui speciem quidem et φαντασμα haberet veritate carens, credere et adorare malint.† But it is not true, as some have hastily stated, that μορφή signifies only the “outward form” of any thing ; it is used in Greek authors for the “essential form,” or “nature” itself, of a thing, of which examples may be seen in Wetstein, Elsner, Rosenmüller, Schleusner, and others ; and, accordingly, Schleusner explains it, *Per metonymiam ; ipsa natura et essentia alicujus rei*, and adds, *Sic legitur in Novo Testamento, (Philippen. ii. 6,) ubi Christus dicitur εν μορφῇ Θεῶν υπαρχων ad designandam sublimiorem ipsius naturam.* The Greek Fathers also understood μορφή in the sense of ουσία, and used the phrase “being in the form of God,” to signify the “being really and truly God.”*

Thus the term itself is sufficiently explicit of the doctrine ; but the context would decide the matter, were the verbal criticism less decidedly in favour of this interpretation. “The form of God” stands opposed to “the form of a servant.” This, say those critics who would make “the form of God” an external appearance only, means “the appearance and behaviour of a bondsman or slave, and not the essence of such a person.” But δουλος, “a slave,” is not in the New Testament taken in the same opprobrious sense as among us. St. Paul calls himself “the slave of Jesus Christ ;” and our translators have, therefore, properly rendered the word by “servant,” as more exactly conveying the meaning intended. Now it is certain, that Christ was the servant or minister both of the

* 1. *Forma, externus habitus, omne quod in oculis occurrit, imago, similitudo* —SCHLEUSNER.

† *Observationes Sacre in loc.*

Father and of his creatures. He himself declares, that he came not "to be ministered unto, but to minister;" and as to be in "the form of a servant" is not, therefore, to have the appearance of a servant, but to be really a servant, so to be "in the form of God," is to be really God. This is rendered still stronger by the following clause, which is exegetic of the preceding, as will appear from the literal rendering, the force of which is obscured by the copulative introduced into the common version. It is not, "And took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men;" but, "being made in the likeness of men;" which clearly denotes that he took "the form of a servant" by "being made in the likeness of men:." So that, as Bishop Pearson irresistibly argues,—

"The phrase 'in the form of God,' not elsewhere mentioned, is used by the Apostle with respect unto that other; of 'the form of a servant,' exegetically continued 'in the likeness of men;' and the respect of one unto the other is so necessary, that if 'the form of God' be not real and essential as 'the form of a servant,' or the likeness of man, there is no force in the Apostle's words, nor will his argument be fit to work any great degree of humiliation upon the consideration of Christ's exinanition. But by 'the form' is certainly understood 'the true condition' of a servant, and by 'the likeness,' is infallibly meant 'the real nature' of man; nor doth the fashion, in which he was found, destroy, but rather assert, the truth of his humanity. And, therefore, as sure as Christ was really and essentially man, of the same nature with us, in whose similitude he was made; so certainly was he also really and essentially God, of the same nature and being with Him in whose form he did subsist."*

The greatness of Him who "humbled himself" being thus laid down by the Apostle, he proceeds to state what, in the process of his humiliation, he waived of that which was due to his greatness. He "thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation;" or, as many

* Discourses on the Creed.

choose to render it, "he emptied himself." Whether the clause, "thought it not robbery," be translated, "esteemed it not an object to be caught at, or eagerly desired, to be as God," or, did not think it an "usurpation," or, as our translators have it, a "robbery," to be equal with God,—signifies little; for, after all the criticism expended on this unusual phrase, that Christ had a right to that which he might have retained, but which he chose to wave when he humbled himself, is sufficiently established both by the meaning of the word and by the connexion itself. Some Socinians allow the common translation; and their own version is to the same effect,—he "did not esteem it a prey," which can only mean, though they attempt to cloud the matter in their note, that he did not esteem that as his own property to which he had no right.* That, then, which he did not account a "prey," a seizure of another's right or property, was "to be equal with God." Whether, in the phrase *το εἶναι ἰσα Θεῷ*, "to be equal with God," *ισα* is to be taken adverbially, and translated, "as, like as," God; or, by enallage, for the singular adjective masculine, and to be rendered "equal" to God, has been matter of dispute. The grammatical authority appears to predominate in favour of the latter,† and it is supported by several of the Fathers and the ancient versions; but here, again, we are not left to the niceties of verbal criticism. If taken in either way, the sense is much the same: "He thought it not a robbery," or usurpation, "to be equal with God," or, "as God," which, as the sense determines, was an equality of honour and dignity; "but made himself of no reputation." For as the phrase, "the form of God," signifies his essential Divinity, so that of which he "emptied" or divested himself for the time was something to which he had a right consequent upon his Divinity; and if "to be equal with God," or "to be as

* *Non rapinam, aut spoliū, alicui detractum, duxit.*—ROSENMULLER. So the ancient versions: *Non rapinam arbitratus est.*—VULGATE. *Non rapinam hoc existimavit.*—SYRIAC.

† See Pearson On the Creed, Art. 2, note; Schleusner, Erasmus, and Schmidt.

God," was his right as a divine Person, it was not any thing that he was essentially, of which he divested himself; (for that were impossible;) but something which, if he had not been God, it would have been a robbery and usurpation either to claim or retain. This, then, can be nothing else but the assumption of a divine majesty and glory; the proclamation of his own rights, and the demand of his creatures' praise and homage, the laying aside of which, indeed, is admirably expressed in our translation, "but made himself of no reputation." This is also established by the antithesis in the text. "The form of a servant" stands opposed to "the form of God,"—a real servant to real Divinity; and to be "equal with God," or, "as God," in glory, honour, and homage, is contrasted with the humiliations of a human state. "In that state he was made flesh, sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, subject to the infirmities and miseries of this life; in that state he was 'made of a woman, made under the law,' and so obliged to fulfil the same; in that state he was born, and lived to manhood, in a mean condition; was 'despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;' in that state, being thus made man, he took upon him 'the form of a servant.' If any man doubt how Christ 'emptied himself,' the text will satisfy him,—'by taking the form of a servant;' if any still question how he 'took the form of a servant,' he hath the Apostle's solution,—'by being made in the likeness of men.' And being 'found in fashion as a man;' being already, by his exinanition, in 'the form of a servant;' he humbled himself, becoming 'obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.'"* The first stage of his humiliation was his assuming "the form of a servant;" the completion of it, his "obedience unto death." But what say the Socinians? As, with them, "to be in the form of God" means "to be invested with miraculous powers;" so, to empty or divest himself, was "his not exerting those powers in order to prevent his crucifixion." The truth, however, is, that

he “emptied” himself, not at his crucifixion, but when he “took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men ;” so that, if to divest or empty himself be explained of laying down his miraculous gifts, he laid them down before he became man, that is, according to them, before he had any existence. There is no alternative, in this and many similar passages, between orthodoxy and the most glaring critical absurdity.

CHAPTER XVI.

Humanity of Christ—Hypostatic Union—Errors as to the Person of Christ.

IN the present day, the controversy as to the Person of Christ is almost wholly confined to the question of his Divinity; but, in the early ages of the church, it was necessary to establish his proper humanity. The denial of this appears to have existed as early as the time of St. John, who, in his Epistles, excludes from the pale of the church all who denied that Christ was come in the flesh. As his Gospel, therefore, proclaims the Godhead, so his Epistles defend also the doctrine of his humanity.

The source of this ancient error appears to have been a philosophical one. Both in the oriental and Greek schools it was a favourite notion, that whatever was joined to matter was necessarily contaminated by it; and that the highest perfection of this life was abstraction from material things, and, in another, a total and final separation from the body. This opinion was, also, the probable cause of leading some persons, in St. Paul's time, to deny the reality of a resurrection, and to explain it figuratively. But, however that may be, it was one of the chief grounds of the rejection of the proper humanity of Christ among the different branches of the Gnostics, who, indeed, erred as to both natures. The things which the Scriptures attribute to the human nature of our Lord, they did not deny; but affirmed that they took place in appearance only, and they were therefore called "Docetæ" and "Phantasiastæ." At a later period, Eutyches fell into a similar error, by teaching that the human nature of Christ was absorbed into the divine, and that his body had no real existence. These errors have passed away, and danger now lies only on one side; not, indeed, because men are become less liable or less disposed to

err, but because philosophy—from vain pretences to which, or a proud reliance upon it, almost all great religious errors spring—has, in later ages, taken a different character.

Whilst these errors denied the real existence of the body of Christ, the Apollinarian heresy rejected the existence of a human soul in our Lord, and taught that the Godhead supplied its place. Thus both these views denied to Christ a proper humanity; and both were, accordingly, condemned by the general church.

Among those who held the union of two natures in Christ, the divine and human, which, in theological language, is called “the hypostatical” or “personal union,” several distinctions were also made which led to a diversity of opinion. The Nestorians acknowledged two persons in our Lord, mystically and more closely united than any human analogy can explain. The Monophysites contended for one person and one nature; the two being supposed to be, in some mysterious manner, confounded. The Monothelites acknowledged two natures and one will. Various other refinements were, at different times, propagated; but the true sense of Scripture appears to have been very accurately expressed by the Council of Chalcedon, in the fifth century,—that in Christ there is one person; in the unity of person, two natures, the divine and the human; and that there is no change, or mixture, or confusion of these two natures, but that each retains its own distinguishing properties. With this agrees the Athanasian Creed, whatever be its date: “Perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul, and human flesh subsisting; who although he be God and man, yet he is not two; but one Christ: One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking the manhood into God; one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person; for as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ.” The Church of England, by adopting this creed, has adopted its doctrine on the hypostatical union, and has further professed it in her Second Article: “The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man’s nature in the

womb of the blessed Virgin of her substance ; so that the two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man."

Whatever objections may be raised against these views by the mere reason of man, unable to comprehend mysteries so high, but often bold enough to impugn them, they certainly exhibit the doctrine of the New Testament on these important subjects, though expressed in different terms. Nor are these formularies to be charged with originating such distinctions, and adding them to the simplicity of Scripture, as they often unjustly are by those who, either from lurking errors in their own minds, or from a vain affectation of being independent of human authority, are most prone to question them. Such expositions of faith were rendered necessary by the dangerous speculations and human refinements to which we have above adverted ; and were intended to be (what they may be easily proved from Scripture to be in reality) summaries of inspired doctrines ; not new distinctions, but declarations of what had been before taught by the Holy Spirit, on the subject of the hypostatical union of natures in Christ ; and the accordance of these admirable summaries with the Scriptures themselves will be very obvious to all who yield to their plain and unperverted testimony. That Christ is very God, has been already proved from the Scriptures, at considerable length : That he was truly a man, no one will be found to doubt : That he is but one person, is sufficiently clear from this,—that no distinction into two was ever made by himself, or by his Apostles ; and from actions peculiar to Godhead being sometimes ascribed to him under his human appellations ; and actions and sufferings peculiar to humanity being also predicated of him under divine titles. That in him there is no confusion of the two natures, is evident from the absolute manner in which both his natures are constantly spoken of in the Scriptures. His Godhead was not deteriorated by uniting itself with a human body, for "he is the true God ;" his humanity was not, whilst on earth, exalted into properties which made it different in kind from the humanity of his creatures ; for, "as the children were

partakers of flesh and blood, he also took part of the same." If the divine nature in him had been imperfect, it would have lost its essential character, for it is essential to Deity to be perfect and complete; if any of the essential properties of human nature had been wanting, he would not have been man; if, as some of the preceding notions implied, divine and human had been mixed and confounded in him, he would have been a compounded being, neither God nor man. Nothing was deficient in his humanity, nothing in his Divinity, and yet he is one Christ. This is clearly the doctrine of the Scripture, and it is admirably expressed in the creeds above quoted; and, on that account, they are entitled to great respect. They embody the sentiments of some of the greatest men that ever lived in the church, in language weighed with the utmost care and accuracy; and they are venerable records of the faith of distant ages.

These two circumstances—the completeness of each nature, and the union of both in one person—form the only key to the language of the New Testament; and they so entirely explain and harmonize the whole as to afford the strongest proof, next to its explicit verbal statements, of the doctrine that our Lord is at once truly God and truly man. On the other hand, the impracticability of giving a consistent explanation of the testimony of God “concerning his Son Jesus Christ” on all other hypotheses, entirely confutes them. In one of two ways only will it be found, by every one who makes the trial honestly, that all the passages of holy writ respecting the person of Christ can be explained; either by referring them, according to the rule of the ancient Fathers, to the *Θεολογια*, by which they meant every thing that related to the Divinity of our Saviour; or to the *οικονομια*, by which they meant his incarnation, and every thing that he did in the flesh to procure the salvation of mankind. This distinction is expressed in modern theological language, by considering some things which are spoken of Christ, as said of his divine, others of his human, nature; and he who takes this principle of interpretation along with him, will seldom find any difficulty in apprehending the sense of the sacred

writers, though the subjects themselves be often, to human minds, inscrutable.

Does any one ask, for instance, "If Jesus Christ was truly God, how could he be born and die? how could he grow in wisdom and stature? how could he be subject to law, be tempted, stand in need of prayer? how could his soul be 'exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,' be 'forsaken of his Father,' 'purchase the church with his own blood,' have 'a joy set before him,' be exalted, have 'all power in heaven and earth' given to him?" &c. The answer is, that he was also man.

If, on the other hand, it be a matter of surprise, that a visible man should heal diseases at his will, and without referring to any higher authority, as he often did; still the winds and the waves; know the thoughts of men's hearts; foresee his own passion in all its circumstances; authoritatively forgive sins; be exalted to absolute dominion over every creature in heaven and earth; be present wherever two or three are gathered in his name; be with his disciples to the end of the world; claim universal homage, and the bowing of the knee of all creatures to his name; be associated with the Father in solemn ascriptions of glory and thanksgiving, and bear even the awful names of God, names of description and revelation, names which express divine attributes:—What is the answer? Can the Socinian scheme, which allows him to be man only, produce a reply? Can it furnish a reasonable interpretation of texts of sacred writ which affirm all these things? Can it suggest any solution which does not imply that the sacred penmen were not only careless writers, but writers who, if they had studied to be misunderstood, could not more delusively have expressed themselves? The only hypothesis explanatory of all these statements, is, that Christ is God as well as man; and by this the consistency of the sacred writers is brought out, and an harmonizing strain of sentiment is seen compacting the Scriptures into one agreeing and mutually-adjusted revelation.

But the union of the two natures in Christ in one hypostasis, or person, is equally essential to the full exposition of the

Scriptures, as the existence of two distinctively, the divine and the human; and without it many passages lose all force, because they lose all meaning. In what possible sense could it be said of the Word, that "He was made" (or became) "flesh," if no such personal unity existed? The Socinians themselves seem to acknowledge the force of this, and therefore translate, "and the Word *was* flesh;" affirming falsely, as various critics have abundantly shown, that the most usual meaning of *γινωμαι* is "to be." Without the hypostatical union, how could the argument of our Lord be supported, that the Messiah is both David's son, and David's Lord? If this is asserted of two persons, then the argument is gone; if of one, then two natures, one which had authority as Lord, and the other capable of natural descent, were united in one person. Allowing that we have established it, that the appellative "Son of God" is the designation of a divine relation, but for this personal union the visible Christ could not be, according to St. Peter's confession, "the Son of the living God." By this doctrine we also learn how it was that the church of God was purchased by his own blood. Even if we concede the genuine reading to be "the Lord," this concession yields nothing to the Socinians, unless the term "Lord" were a human title, which has been already disproved; and unless a mere man could be "Lord both of the dead and the living," could wield universal sovereignty, and be entitled to universal homage. If, then, the title, "the Lord," be an appellation of Christ's superior nature, in no other sense could it be said that the church was purchased by his own blood, than by supposing the existence of that union which we call personal; a union which alone distinguishes the sufferings of Christ from that of his martyred followers, gave to them a merit which theirs had not, and made his blood capable of purchasing the salvation of the church. For, disallow that union, and we can see no possible meaning in calling the blood of Christ "the blood of God," or, if it please better, "of the Lord;" or in what that great peculiarity consisted which made it capable of purchasing or redeeming.

Dr. Pye Smith, in his very able work *On the Person of*

Christ, has rather inconsiderately blamed the orthodox, for “the very serious offence of sometimes using language, which applies to the divine nature the circumstances and properties that could only attach to his humanity,” as giving unhappy occasion to the objections and derisions of their opponents. As he gives no instances, he had his eye, probably, upon some extreme cases; but if he meant it as a remark of general application, it seems to have arisen from a very mistaken view, and assumes, that the objections of opponents lie rather against terms than against the doctrine of Christ’s Divinity itself.

This is so far from being the case, that, if the orthodox were to attend to the caution given by this writer on this subject, they would not approach one step nearer to the conversion of those who are in this fundamental error; supporting it, as they do, by perversions so manifest, and by criticisms so shameless. I am no apologist, however, of real “errors and faults” in theological language; but the practice referred to, so far from being “a serious offence,” has the authority of the writers of the New Testament. Argumentatively, the distinction between the divine and human natures, according to the rule before given, must be maintained; but when speaking cursorily, and on the assumption of the unquestionable truth of the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures,—a manner of speaking which, it is hoped, all true Christians adopt, as arising from their settled convictions on this point,—those very terms, so common among the orthodox, and so objectionable to those who “deny the Lord that bought them,” must be maintained in spite of derision, or the language of the New Testament must be dropped, or at least be made very select, if this dangerous, and, in the result, this betraying, courtesy be adopted. For what does Dr. P Smith gain, when cautioning the believer against the use of the phrase “the blood of God,” by reminding him that there is reason to prefer the reading, “the church of the Lord, which he hath purchased by his own blood?” The orthodox contend, that the appellation “the Lord,” when applied to our Saviour, is his title as God; and the heterodox know, also, that the

“blood of the Lord” is a phrase with us entirely equivalent to “the blood of God.” They know, too, that we neither believe that “God” nor “the Lord” could die: But, in using the established phrase, the all-important doctrine of the existence of such a union between the two natures of our Lord as to make the blood which he shed more than the blood of a mere man, more than the blood of his mere humanity itself, is maintained and exhibited; and whilst we allow that God could not die, yet there is a most important sense in which the blood of Christ was “the blood of God.”

We do not attempt to explain this mystery, but we find it on record; and, in point of fact, that careful appropriation of the properties of the two natures to each respectively, which Dr. Pye Smith recommends, is not very frequent in the New Testament, and for this obvious reason, that the question of our Lord’s Divinity is more generally introduced as an indisputed principle than argued upon. It is true, that the Apostle Paul lays it down, that our Lord was of the seed of David, “according to the flesh,” and “the Son of God, according to the Spirit of holiness.” Here is an instance of the distinction; but generally this is not observed by the Apostles, because the equally fundamental doctrine was always present to them, that the same Person who was flesh was also truly God. Hence they scruple not to say, that “the Lord of glory was crucified,” that “the Prince of life was killed,” and that He who was “in the form of God” became “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

We return from this digression to notice a few other passages, the meaning of which can only be opened by the doctrine of the personal union of the divine and human natures in Christ. “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;” (Col. ii. 9;) not by a type and figure, but, as the word *σωματικῶς* signifies, “really” and “substantially,” and, for the full exposition, we must add, by personal union; for we have no other idea by which to explain an expression never used to signify the inhabitation of good men by God, and

which is here applied to Christ in a way of eminence and peculiarity.*

“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” (Heb. i. 3.) To this passage, also, the hypostatical union is the only key. Of whom does the Apostle speak when he says, “when he had by himself purged our sins,” but of Him who is “the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person?” He, “by himself, purged our sins;” yet this was done by the shedding of his blood. In that higher nature, however, he could not suffer death; and nothing could make the sufferings of his humanity a purification of sins “by himself,” but such a union as should constitute one person; for, unless this be allowed, either the characters of Divinity, in the preceding verses, are characters of a merely human being; or else, that higher nature was capable of suffering death; or, if not, the purification was not made “by himself,” which yet the text affirms.

In fine, all passages which (not to mention many others) come under the following classes, have their true interpretation thus laid open, and are generally utterly unmeaning on any other hypothesis:—

1. Those which, like some of the foregoing, speak of the efficacy of the sufferings of Christ for the remission of sins. In this class the two following may be given as examples: “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death,” &c. (Heb. ii. 14.) Here the efficacy of the death of Christ is explicitly stated; but as explicitly is it said to be the death of one who partook of flesh and blood, or who assumed human nature. The power of deliverance is ascribed to Him who thus invested himself with a nature below that of his own original nature; but in that lower nature he dies,

* Σωματικῶς, *h. e. verè, perfectissimè, non typicè et umbraliter, sicut in V. T. Deus se manifestavit. Est autem inhabitatio illa et unio personalis, et singularissima.*—GLASSIUS.

and by that death he delivers those who had been "all their lifetime subject to bondage." The second is, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins; who is the image of the invisible God," &c. (Col. i. 14, 15.) In this passage, the lofty description which is given of the person of Christ stands in immediate connexion with the mention of the efficacy of "his blood;" and is to be considered as the reason why, through that blood, redemption and remission of sins became attainable. Thus "without shedding of blood there could be no remission;" but the blood of Jesus only is thus efficacious, who is "the image of the invisible God," the Creator of all things. "His blood" it could not be but for the hypostatical union; and it is equally true, that but for this he could have had no blood to shed; because, as "the image of the invisible God," that is, God's equal, or God himself, his nature was incapable of death.

2. In the second class are all those passages which argue from the compassion which our Lord manifested in his humiliation, and his own experience of sufferings, to the exercise of confidence in him by his people in dangers and afflictive circumstances. Of these the following may be given for the sake of illustration: "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. iv. 15, 16.) Several similar passages occur in the early part of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the argument of them all is precisely the same. The humiliation of our Lord, and his acquaintance with human woes, may assure us of his sympathy; but sympathy is not help: He is represented, therefore, as the Source of succour, as the "Author of salvation," "the Captain of our salvation," in consequence of the sufferings he endured; and to him all his people are directed to fly for aid in prayer, and, by entire trust in his power, grace, and presence, to assure themselves that timely succour and final salvation shall be bestowed upon them by him. Now here, also, it is clear, that the Sufferer and the Saviour are the same

person. The man might suffer, but sufferings could not enable the man to save; they could give no new qualification to human nature, nor bestow upon that nature any new right. But, besides the nature which suffered, and learned the bitterness of human woes by experience, there is a nature which can know the sufferings of all others, in all places, at all times; which can also ascertain the "time of need" with exactness, and the "grace" suitable to it; which can effectually "help" and sustain the sorrows of the very heart,—a power peculiar to Divinity,—and, finally, bestow eternal salvation. This must be divine; but it is one in personal union with that which suffered and was taught sympathy; and it is this union which constitutes that "great High Priest" of our profession, that "merciful and faithful High Priest," who is able "to succour us when we are tempted." Thus, as it has been well observed on this subject, "It is by the union of two natures in one person that Christ is qualified to be the Saviour of the world. He became man, that, with the greatest possible advantage to those whom he was sent to instruct, he might teach them the nature and the will of God; that his life might be their example; that, by being once compassed with the infirmities of human nature, he might give them assurance of his fellow-feeling; that, by suffering on the cross, he might make atonement for their sins; and that, in his reward, they might behold the earnest and the pattern of theirs.

"But had Jesus been only man, or had he been one of the spirits that surround the throne of God, he could not have accomplished the work which he undertook; for the whole obedience of every creature being due to the Creator, no part of that obedience can be placed to the account of other creatures, so as to supply the defects of their service, or to rescue them from the punishment which they deserve. The Scriptures, therefore, reveal, that he who appeared upon earth as man, is also God, and, as God, was mighty to save; and by this revelation they teach us, that the merit of our Lord's obedience, and the efficacy of his interposition, depend upon the hypostatical union.

"All modern sects of Christians agree in admitting, that

the greatest benefits arise to us from the Saviour of the world being man ; but the Arians and Socinians contend earnestly, that his sufferings do not derive any value from his being God ; and their reasoning is specious. ‘ You say,’ they argue, ‘ that Jesus Christ, who suffered for the sins of men, is both God and man. You must either say that God suffered, or that he did not suffer : If you say that God suffered, you do indeed affix an infinite value to the sufferings ; but you affirm that the Godhead is capable of suffering, which is both impious and absurd : If you say that God did not suffer, then, although the person that suffered had both a divine and a human nature, the sufferings were merely those of a man ; for, according to your own system, the two natures are distinct, and the divine is impassible.’

“ In answer to this method of arguing, we may admit that the Godhead cannot suffer ; and we do not pretend to explain the kind of support which the human nature derived, under its sufferings, from the divine, or the manner in which the two were united. But from the uniform language of Scripture, which magnifies the love of God in giving his only-begotten Son, which speaks in the highest terms of the preciousness of the blood of Christ, which represents him as coming, in the body that was prepared for him, to do that which sacrifice and burnt-offering could not do :—From all this we infer, that there was a value, a merit, in the sufferings of this Person, superior to that which belonged to the sufferings of any other ; and as the same Scriptures intimate, in numberless places, the strictest union between the divine and human nature of Christ, by applying to him promiscuously the actions which belong to each nature, we hold that it is impossible for us to separate, in our imagination, this peculiar value which they affix to his sufferings, from the peculiar dignity of his person.

“ The hypostatical union, then, is the corner-stone of our religion. We are too much accustomed, in all our researches, to perceive that things are united, without our being able to investigate the bond which unites them, to feel any degree of surprise that we cannot answer all the questions which ingenious men have proposed upon this subject ; but we can clearly

discern, in those purposes of the incarnation of the Son of God which the Scriptures declare, the reason why they have dwelt so largely upon his Divinity ; and if we are careful to take into our view the whole of that description which they give of the Person by whom the remedy in the Gospel was brought ; if, in our speculations concerning him, we neither lose sight of the two parts which are clearly revealed, nor forget, what we cannot comprehend, that union between the two parts which is necessarily implied in the revelation of them, we shall perceive, in the character of the Messiah, a completeness and a suitability to the design of his coming, which of themselves create a strong presumption that we have rightly interpreted the Scriptures.”*

On this evidence from the holy Scriptures the doctrine of the Divinity of our blessed Saviour rests. Into the argument from antiquity my limits will not allow me to enter. If the great “falling away,” predicted by St. Paul, had involved, generally, this high doctrine ; if both the Latin and Greek churches had wholly departed from the faith, instead of having united, without intermission, to say, “Thou art the King of glory, O Christ ; thou art the everlasting Son of the Father ;” the truth of God would not have been made of “none effect.” God would still have been true, though every man, from the age of inspiration, had become a liar. The Socinians have, of late years, shown great anxiety to obtain some suffrages from antiquity in their favour, and have collected every instance possible of early departure from the faith. They might, indeed, have found heretical pravity and its adherents, without travelling out of the New Testament ; men, not only near the apostolic age, but in the very days of the Apostles, who rejected the resurrection, who consented not “to wholesome doctrine,” who made “shipwreck of faith,” as well as “of a good conscience,” who denied “the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ,” “the Lord that bought them.” This kind of antiquity is, in truth, in their favour ; and, as human nature is substantially the same in all ages,

there is as much reason to expect errors in one age as another; but, that any body of Christians, in any sense entitled to be considered as an acknowledged branch of the church of Christ, can be found, in primitive times, to give any sanction to their opinions and interpretations of Scripture, they have failed to establish. For full information on the subject of the opinions of the primitive churches, and a full refutation of all the pretences which Arians and Socinians, in these later times, have made to be, in part, supported by primitive authority, the works of Bishop Bull, Dr. Waterland, and Bishop Horsley,* must be consulted; and the result will show, that, in the interpretation of the scriptures given above, we are supported by the successive and according testimonies of all that is truly authoritative in those illustrious ages which furnished so many imperishable writings for the edification of the future church, and so many martyrs and confessors of "the truth as it is in Jesus."

Among the numerous errors, with respect to the person of our Lord, which formerly sprung up in the church, and were opposed, with an ever-watchful zeal, by its authorities, three only can be said to have much influence in the present day, Arianism, Sabellianism, and Socinianism. In our own country, the two former are almost entirely merged in the last, whose characteristic is the tenet of the simple humanity of Christ. Arius, who gave his name to the first, seems to have wrought some of the floating errors of previous times into a kind of system, which, however, underwent various modifications among his followers. The distinguishing tenet of this system was, that Christ was the first and most exalted of creatures; that he was produced in a peculiar manner, and endowed with great perfections; that by him God made the world; that he alone proceeded immediately from God, whilst other things were produced mediately by him; and that all things were put under his administration. The semi-Arians divided from the Arians; but still differed from the orthodox, in refusing to

* See also Wilson's Illustration of the Method of explaining the New Testament by the early Opinions of Jews and Christians concerning Christ; and Dr. Jamieson's Vindication, &c

admit that the Son was *homoousios*, or “of the same substance” with the Father, but acknowledged him to be *homoiousios*, “of a like substance” with the Father. It was only, however, in appearance that they came nearer to the truth than the Arians themselves; for they contended that this likeness to the Father in essence was not by nature, but by peculiar privilege. In their system Christ, therefore, was but a creature. A still further refinement on this doctrine was, in this country, advocated by Dr. Samuel Clarke, which Dr. Waterland, his great and illustrious opponent, showed, notwithstanding the orthodox terms employed, still implied that Christ was a created being, unless an evident absurdity were admitted.*

The Sabellian doctrine stands equally opposed to Trinitarianism and to the Arian system. It asserts the Divinity of the Son and the Spirit against the latter; and denies the personality of both, in opposition to the former. Sabellius taught that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are only denominations of one hypostasis; in other words, that there is but one person in the Godhead, and that the Son and Word are virtues, emanations, or functions only; that, under the Old Testament, God delivered the law as Father; under the New, dwelt among men, or was incarnate, as the Son; and descended on the Apostles as the Spirit. Because their scheme, by denying a real Sonship, obliged them to acknowledge that it was the Father who suffered for the sins of men, the Sabellians were often, in the early ages, called “Patripassians.”

On the refutation of these errors it is not necessary to dwell, both because they have now little influence, and chiefly because both are involved in the Socinian question, and are decided by the establishment of the scriptural doctrine of a trinity of divine Persons in the unity of the Godhead. If Jesus Christ

* Dr. Samuel Clarke’s hypothesis was, that there is one supreme Being, who is the Father, and two subordinate, derived, and dependent beings. But he objected to call Christ “a creature,” thinking him something between a created and a self-existent nature. Dr. Clarke appealed to the Fathers; and Petavius, a learned Jesuit, in his *Dogmata Theologica*, had previously endeavoured to prove that the ante-Nicene Fathers leaned to Arianism. Bishop Bull, in his great work on this subject, and Dr. Waterland, may be considered as fully having put that question to rest, in opposition to both.

be the divine Son of God ; if he were “ sent ” from God, and “ returned ” to God ; if he distinguished himself from the Father both in his divine and human nature, saying, as to the former, “ I and my Father are one,” and, as to the latter, “ My Father is greater than I ;” if there be any meaning at all in his declaration, “ No man knoweth the Son but the Father, and no man knoweth the Father but the Son,”—words which cannot, by any possibility, be spoken of an official distinction, or of an emanation or operation ; then all these passages prove a real personality, and are incapable of being explained by a modal one. This is the answer to the Sabellian opinion ; and as to the Arian hypothesis, it falls, with Socinianism, before that series of proofs which has already been adduced from holy writ, to establish the eternity, consubstantiality, co-equality, and, consequently, the proper Divinity of our Redeemer ; and, perhaps, the true reason why not even the semi-Arianism, which was argued with so much subtlety by Dr. Samuel Clarke, has been able to retain any influence among us, is less to be attributed to the able and learned writings of Dr. Waterland and others, who chased the error through all its changeful transformations, than to the manifest impossibility of conceiving of a being which is neither truly God nor a creature ; and to the total absence of all countenance in the Scriptures, however tortured, in favour of this opinion. Socinianism assumes a plausibility in some of its aspects, because Christ was really a man ; but semi-Arianism is a mere hypothesis, which can scarcely find a text of Scripture to pervert.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Personality and Deity of the Holy Ghost.

THE discussion of this great point of Christian doctrine may be included in much narrower limits than those I have assigned to the Divinity of Christ, so many of the principles on which it rests having been closely considered, and because the Deity of the Spirit, in several instances, inevitably follows from that of the Son. As the object of this work is to educe the doctrine of the sacred Scriptures on all the leading articles of faith, it will, however, be necessary to show the evidence which is there given to the two propositions in the title of the chapter: That the Holy Ghost (from the Saxon word *gast*, “a spirit”) is a Person; and that he is God.

As to the manner of his being, the orthodox doctrine is, that as Christ is God by an eternal filiation, so the Spirit is God by procession from the Father and the Son: “And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who, with the Father and the Son together, is worshipped and glorified.”* “The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.”† “The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.”‡ The Latin church introduced the term “spiration,” from *spiro*, “to breathe,” to denote the manner of this procession; on which Dr. Owen remarks, “As the vital breath of a man has a continual emanation from him, and yet is never separated utterly from his person or forsaketh him, so doth the Spirit of the Father and the Son proceed from them by a con-

* Nicene Creed.

† Athanasian Creed.

‡ Articles of the English Church.

tinual divine emanation, still abiding one with them." On this refined view little can be said which has obvious scriptural authority; and yet the very term by which the Third Person in the Trinity is designated, "wind" or "breath," may, as to the Third Person, be designed, like the term "Son" applied to the Second, to convey, though imperfectly, some intimation of that manner of being by which both are distinguished from each other, and from the Father; and it was a remarkable action of our Lord, and one certainly which does not discountenance this idea, that when he imparted the Holy Ghost to his disciples, "he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." (John xx. 22.)*

But, whatever we may think as to the doctrine of "spiration," the procession of the Holy Ghost rests on direct scriptural authority, and is thus stated by Bishop Pearson:—

"Now, this procession of the Spirit, in reference to the Father, is delivered expressly in relation to the Son, and is contained virtually in the Scriptures. First: It is expressly said, that the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father, as our Saviour testifieth: 'When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.' (John xv. 26.) And this is also evident from what hath been already asserted: For being the Father and the Spirit are the same God, and, being so the same in the unity of the nature of God, are yet distinct in the personality, one of them must have the same nature from the other; and because the Father hath been already shown to have it from none, it followeth that the Spirit hath it from him.

"Secondly. Though it be not expressly spoken in the Scripture, that the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and Son, yet the substance of the same truth is virtually con-

* "The Father hath relation to the Son, as the Father of the Son; the Son to the Father, as the Son of the Father; and the Holy Ghost, being the Spirit or breath of the Father and the Son, to both."—LAWSON'S *Theo-Politica*. But though "breath" or "wind" is the radical signification of *πνευμα*, as also of *spiritus*, yet, probably from its sacredness, it is but rarely used in that sense in the New Testament.

tained there ; because those very expressions which are spoken of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Father, for that reason, because he proceedeth from the Father, are also spoken of the same Spirit in relation to the Son ; and therefore there must be the same reason pre-supposed in reference to the Son, which is expressed in reference to the Father. Because the Spirit proceedeth from the Father, therefore it is called ‘the Spirit of God,’ and ‘the Spirit of the Father :’ ‘It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.’ (Matt. x. 20.) For by the language of the Apostle, ‘the Spirit of God’ is the Spirit which is of God, saying, ‘The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. And we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God.’ (1 Cor. ii. 11, 12.) Now, the same Spirit is also called ‘the Spirit of the Son :’ For, ‘because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts :’ (Gal. iv. 6 :) ‘The Spirit of Christ :’ ‘Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his :’ (Rom. viii. 9 :) ‘Even the Spirit of Christ which was in the Prophets :’ (1 Peter i. 11 :) ‘The Spirit of Jesus Christ,’ as the Apostle speaks : ‘I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.’ (Phil. i. 19.) If, then, the Holy Ghost be called ‘the Spirit of the Father,’ because he proceedeth from the Father, it followeth that, being called also ‘the Spirit of the Son,’ he proceedeth also from the Son.

“Again : Because the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father, he is therefore sent by the Father, as from him who hath, by the original communication, a right of mission ; as, ‘The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send.’ (John xiv. 26.) But the same Spirit which is sent by the Father, is also sent by the Son, as he saith, ‘When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you.’ Therefore the Son hath the same right of mission with the Father, and consequently must be acknowledged to have communicated the same essence. The Father is never sent by the Son, because he received not the Godhead from him ; but the Father sendeth the Son, because he communicated the God-

head to him : In the same manner, neither the Father nor the Son is ever sent by the Holy Spirit ; because neither of them received the divine nature from the Spirit : But both the Father and the Son sendeth the Holy Ghost, because the divine nature, common to the Father and the Son, was communicated by them both to the Holy Ghost. As, therefore, the Scriptures declare expressly, that the Spirit proceedeth from the Father ; so do they also virtually teach, that he proceedeth from the Son.” *

In opposition to the doctrine of the personality and Deity of the Spirit, stands the Socinian hypothesis ; which I state before the evidence from Scripture is adduced, that it may be seen upon examination of inspired testimony, how far it is supported by that authority. Arius regarded the Spirit, not only as a creature, but as created by Christ, *κτισμα κτισματος*, “the creature of a creature.” Some time afterward, his personality was wholly denied by the Arians, and he was considered as the exerted energy of God. This appears to have been the notion of Socinus, and, with occasional modifications, has been adopted by his followers. They sometimes regard him as an attribute, and at others resolve the passages in which he is spoken of into a periphrasis, or circumlocution, for God himself ; or, to express both in one, into a figure of speech.

In establishing the proper personality and Deity of the Holy Ghost, the first argument is drawn from the frequent association, in Scripture, of a person, under that appellation, with two other persons, one of whom, the Father, is by all acknowledged to be divine ; and the ascription to each of them, or to the three in union, of the same acts, titles, and authority, with worship, of the same kind, and, for any distinction that is made, in an equal degree. This argument has already been applied to establish the Divinity of the Son, whose personality is not questioned ; and the terms of the proposition may be as satisfactorily established as to the Holy Spirit, and will prove at the same time both his personality and his Divinity.

With respect to the Son, we have seen that, as so great and

* Discourses on the Creed.

fundamental a doctrine as his Deity might naturally be expected to be announced in the Old Testament revelation, though its full manifestation should be reserved to the New ; so it was, in fact, not faintly shadowed forth, but displayed with so much clearness as to become an article of faith in the Jewish church. The manifestation of the existence and Divinity of the Holy Spirit may also be expected in the law and the Prophets ; and is, in fact, to be traced there with equal certainty. The Spirit is represented as an agent in creation, "moving upon the face of the waters ;" and it forms no objection to the argument, that creation is ascribed to the Father, and also to the Son, but is a great confirmation of it. That creation should be effected by all the three Persons of the Godhead, though acting in different respects, yet so that each should be a Creator, and therefore both a Person and a divine Person, can be explained only by their unity in one essence. On every other hypothesis this scriptural fact is disallowed, and therefore no other hypothesis can be true. If the Spirit of God be a mere influence, then he is not a Creator, distinct from the Father and the Son, because he is not a Person ; but this is refuted both by the passage just quoted, and by Psalm xxxiii. 6 : " By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made ; and all the host of them by the breath" (Heb., " Spirit") " of his mouth." This is further confirmed by Job xxxiii. 4 : " The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life ;" where the second clause is obviously exegetic of the former : And the whole text proves that, in the patriarchal age, the followers of the true religion ascribed creation to the Spirit, as well as to the Father ; and that one of his appellations was " the breath of the Almighty." Did such passages stand alone, there might, indeed, be some plausibility in the criticism which solves them by a personification ; but, connected as they are with that whole body of evidence which has been and shall be adduced, as to the concurring doctrine of both Testaments, they are inexpugnable. Again : If the personality of the Son and the Spirit be allowed, and yet it is contended that they were but instruments in creation, through whom the creative power of another operated,

but which creative power was not possessed by them ; on this hypothesis, too, neither the Spirit nor the Son can be said to create, any more than Moses created the serpent into which his rod was turned, and the Scriptures are again contradicted. To this association of the three Persons in creative acts may be added a like association in acts of preservation ; which has been well called a continued creation, and by that term is expressed in the following passage : “ These wait all upon thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled ; thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust : Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created ; and thou renewest the face of the earth.” (Psalm civ. 27—30.) It is not, surely, here meant, that the Spirit by which the generations of animals are perpetuated, is wind ; and if he be called an attribute, wisdom, power, or both united, where do we read of such attributes being “ sent,” “ sent forth from God ? ” The personality of the Spirit is here as clearly marked as when St. Paul speaks of God “ sending forth the Spirit of his Son,” and when our Lord promises to “ send ” the Comforter ; and as the upholding and preserving of created things is ascribed to the Father and the Son, so here they are ascribed, also, to the Spirit, “ sent forth from ” God to “ create and renew the face of the earth.”

The next association of the three Persons we find in the inspiration of the Prophets : “ God spake unto our fathers by the Prophets,” says St. Paul. (Heb. i. 1.) St. Peter declares that these “ holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost ; ” (2 Peter i. 21 ;) and also that it was “ the Spirit of Christ which was in them.” (1 Peter i. 11.) We may defy any Socinian to interpret these three passages by making the Spirit an influence or attribute, and thereby reducing the term “ Holy Ghost ” into a figure of speech. “ God,” in the first passage, is, unquestionably, God the Father ; and the “ holy men of God,” the Prophets, would then, according to this view, be moved by the influence of the Father ; but the influence, according to the third passage, which was the source of their inspiration, was the Spirit, or the

influence, of Christ. Thus the passages contradict each other. Allow the Trinity in Unity, and you have no difficulty in calling the Spirit, “the Spirit of the Father,” and “the Spirit of the Son,” or the Spirit of either; but if the Spirit be an influence, that influence cannot be the influence of two persons, one of them God, and the other a creature. Even if they allowed the pre-existence of Christ, with Arians, the passages are inexplicable by Socinians; but, denying his pre-existence, they have no subterfuge but to interpret “the Spirit of Christ,” “the spirit which prophesied of Christ,”* which is a purely gratuitous paraphrase; or “the spirit of an anointed one, or Prophet;” that is, “the Prophet’s own spirit,” which is just as gratuitous and as unsupported by any parallel as the former. If, however, the Holy Spirit be the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, united in one essence, the passages are easily harmonized. In conjunction with the Father and the Son, he is the Source of that prophetic inspiration under which the Prophets spoke and acted. So the same Spirit which raised Christ from the dead is said by St. Peter to have preached by Noah, whilst the ark was preparing;—an allusion to the passage, “My Spirit shall not always strive,” contend, debate, “with man.” This, we may observe, affords an eminent proof, that the writers of the New Testament understood the phrase, “the Spirit of God,” as it occurs in the Old Testament, personally. For, whatever may be the full meaning of that difficult passage in St. Peter, Christ is clearly declared to have preached by the Spirit in the days of Noah; that is, he, by the Spirit, inspired Noah to preach. If, then, the Apostles understood that the Holy Ghost was a Person,—a point which will presently be established,—we have, in the text just quoted from the Book of Genesis, a key to the meaning of those texts in the Old Testament where the phrases, “my Spirit,” “the Spirit of God,” and “the Spirit of the Lord,” occur; and inspired authority is thus afforded us to interpret them as of a Person; and if of a Person, the very effort made by Socinians to deny his personality, itself, indicates that that Person must,

* New Version *in loc.*

from the lofty titles and works ascribed to him, be inevitably divine. Such phrases occur in many passages of the Hebrew Scriptures; but, in the following, the Spirit is also eminently distinguished from two other Persons: "And now the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me;" (Isaiah xlviii. 16;) or, rendered better, "hath sent me and his Spirit," both terms being in the accusative case. "Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read: For my mouth it hath commanded, and his Spirit it hath gathered them." (Isaiah xxxiv. 16.) "I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts; according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not. For thus saith the Lord of Hosts: I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come." (Hag. ii. 4—7.) Here, also, the Spirit of the Lord is seen collocated with the Lord of Hosts and the Desire of all nations, who is the Messiah. For other instances of the indication of a trinity of divine Persons in the Old Testament, see Part Second, chap. 9.

Three Persons, and three only, are associated also, both in the Old and New Testament, as objects of supreme worship; as the one name in which the religious act of solemn benediction is performed, and to which men are bound by solemn religious covenant.

In the plural form of the name of "God," which has already been considered,* each received equal adoration. That three-fold personality seems to have given rise to the standing form of triple benediction used by the Jewish High Priest, also before mentioned.† The very important fact, that, in the vision of Isaiah, (chap. vi.,) the Lord of Hosts, who spake unto the Prophet, is, in Acts xxviii. 25, said to be the Holy Ghost who spake to the Prophet, whilst St. John declares that the glory which Isaiah saw was the glory of Christ, proves, indisputably, that each of the three Persons bears this august appellation;‡ it gives also the reason for the three-fold repetition, "Holy, holy, holy;" and it exhibits the Prophet and the very seraphs in deep and awful adoration before the triune

* Part Second, chap. 9.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

Lord of Hosts. Both the Prophet and seraphim were, therefore, worshippers of the Holy Ghost and of the Son, at the very time and by the very acts in which they worshipped the Father ; which proves that, as the three Persons received equal homage in a case which does not admit of the evasion of pretended superior and inferior worship, they are equal in majesty, glory, and essence.

As in the tabernacle form of benediction, the triune Jehovah is recognised as the source of all grace and peace to his creatures, so in the apostolic formula of blessing : “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.” Here the personality of the Three is kept distinct, and the prayer to the Three is, that Christians may have a common participation of the Holy Spirit, that is, doubtless, as he was promised by our Lord to his disciples, as a Comforter, as the Source of light and spiritual life, as the Author of regeneration. Thus the Spirit is acknowledged, equally with the Father and the Son, to be the Source and the Giver of the highest spiritual blessings ; whilst this solemn ministerial benediction is, from its specific character, to be regarded as an act of prayer to each of the three Persons, and therefore is at once an acknowledgment of the Divinity and personality of each. The same remark applies to Revelation i. 4, 5 : “Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come ; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne ;” (an emblematical representation, in reference, probably, to the golden branch with its seven lamps ;) “and from Jesus Christ.” The style of the book sufficiently accounts for the Holy Spirit being called “the seven Spirits ;” but no created spirit or company of created spirits are ever spoken of under that appellation ; and the place assigned to “the seven Spirits,” between the mention of the Father and the Son, indicates, with certainty, that one of the sacred Three, so eminent, and so exclusively eminent, in both dispensations, is intended.

The form of baptism next presents itself with demonstrative evidence on the two points before us, the personality and Divinity of the Holy Spirit. It is the form of covenant by

which the sacred Three become our one or only God, and we become his people: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." In what manner is this text to be disposed of, if the personality of the Holy Ghost is denied? Is the form of baptism to be so understood as to imply, that it is baptism in the name of one God, one creature, and one attribute? The grossness of this absurdity refutes it, and proves that here, at least, there can be no personification. If all the Three, therefore, are persons, are we to make Christian baptism a baptism in the name of one God and two creatures? This would be too near an approach to idolatry, or, rather, it would be idolatry itself; for, considering baptism as an act of dedication to God, the acceptance of God as our God, on our part, and the renunciation of all other deities and all other religions, what could a heathen convert conceive of the two creatures so distinguished from all other creatures in heaven and in earth, and so associated with God himself as to form together the one name, to which, by that act, he was devoted, and which he was henceforward to profess and honour, but that they were equally divine, unless special care were taken to instruct him that but one of the three was God, and the two others but creatures? But of this care, of this cautionary instruction, though so obviously necessary upon this theory, no single instance can be given in all the writings of the Apostles.

Baptism was not a new rite. It was used as a religious act among Heathens, and especially before initiation into their mysteries. Proselytes to the law of Moses were, probably, received by baptism; whether in, or into, the name of the God of Israel does not appear;* but necessarily on professing their faith in him as the true and only God. John, the forerunner of our Lord, baptized; but it does not appear that he

* The baptism of Jewish proselytes is a disputed point. It was strenuously maintained by Dr. Lightfoot, and opposed by Dr. Benson. Wall has, however, made the practice highly probable, and it is spoken of in the Gospels as a rite with which the Jews were familiar. Certainly it was a practice among the Jews near the Christian era.

baptized in the name, or into the name, of any one. This baptism was to all but our Lord, who needed it not, a baptism “unto repentance,” that is, on profession of repentance, to be followed by “fruits meet for repentance,” and into the expectation of the speedy approach of Messiah. But Christian baptism was directed to be in the name of three Persons ; which peculiarity implies, first, the form of words to be used in the administration ; second, the authority conveyed to receive into the church such persons as had been made disciples, and, consequently, into covenant with God ; third, the faith required of the person baptized,—faith in the existence of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and in their character according to the revelation made of each, first, by inspired teachers, and, in after-times, by their writings ; and, fourth, consecration to the service of the three Persons, having one name, which could be no other than that of the one God. What stronger proof of the Divinity of each can be given than is found in this single passage ? The form exhibits three Persons, without any note of superiority or inferiority, except that of the mere order in which they are placed. It conveys authority in the united name ; and the authority is, therefore, equal. It supposes faith, that is, not merely belief, but, as the object of religious profession and adherence, trust in each, or collectively in the one name which unites the Three in One ; yet that which is divine only can be properly the object of religious truth. It implies devotion to the service of each, the yielding of obedience, the consecration of every power of mind and body to each ; and therefore each must have an equal right to this surrender, and to the authority which it implies.

It has been objected, that baptism is, in the book of Acts, frequently mentioned as baptism “in the name of the Lord Jesus” simply ; and from hence the Socinians would infer that the formula in the Gospel of St. Matthew was not in use. If this were so, it would only conclude against the use of the words of our Lord as the standing form of baptism, but would prove nothing against the significancy of baptism in whatever form it might be administered. For as this passage in St. Matthew was the original commission under which, alone, the

Apostles had authority to baptize at all, the import of the rite is marked out in it ; and, whatever words they used in baptism, they were found to explain the import of the rite, as laid down by their Master, to all disciples so received. But, from the passages adduced from the Acts, the inference that the form of baptism given in Matthew was not rigorously observed by the Apostles, does not follow ; “ because the earliest Christian writers inform us, that this solemn form of expression was uniformly employed from the beginning of the Christian church. It is true, indeed, that the Apostle Peter said to those who were converted on the day of Pentecost, ‘ Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ ;’ (Acts ii. 38 ;) and that, in different places of the book of Acts, it is said, that persons were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus ; but there is internal evidence from the New Testament itself, that when the historian says, that persons were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, he means they were baptized according to the form prescribed by Jesus. Thus the question put, ‘ Unto what then were ye baptized ?’ (Acts xix. 3,) shows that he did not suppose it possible for any person who administered Christian baptism to omit the mention of ‘ the Holy Ghost ;’ and even after the question, the historian, when he informs us that the disciples were baptized, is not solicitous to repeat the whole form, but says, in his usual manner, ‘ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.’ (Acts xix. 5.) There is another question put by the Apostle Paul, which shows us in what light he viewed the form of baptism : ‘ Were ye baptized in the name of Paul ?’ (1 Cor. i. 13.) Here the question implies that he considered the form of baptism as so sacred, that the introducing the name of a teacher into it was the same thing as introducing a new master into the kingdom of Christ.”

Ecclesiastical antiquity comes in, also, to establish the exact use of this form in baptism, as the practice from the days of the Apostles. The most ancient method was for the person to be baptized to say, “ I believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.” This was his profession of faith ; and, with respect to the administration, Justin Martyr, who was born

soon after the death of the Apostle John, says, in his first Apology: "Whosoever can be persuaded and believe that those things which are taught and asserted by us are true, are brought by us to a place where there is water, and regenerated according to the rite of regeneration, by which we ourselves have been born again. For then they are washed in the water, in the name of God the Father and Lord of all, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost." This passage, I may observe by the way, shows that, in the primitive church, men were not baptized in order to their being taught, but taught in order to their being baptized; and that, consequently, baptism was not a mere expression of willingness to be instructed, but a profession of faith, and a consecration to the Trinity, after the course of instruction was completed. Tertulian also says, "The law of baptism is enjoined, and the form prescribed, 'Go teach the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.'"*

The testimonies to this effect are abundant;† and, together with the form given by our Lord, they prove that every Christian, in the first ages, did, upon his very entrance into the church of Christ, profess his faith in the Divinity and personality of the Holy Ghost, as well as of the Father and the Son.

But other arguments are not wanting to prove both the personality and the Divinity of the Holy Spirit. With respect to the former:—

1. The mode of his subsistence in the sacred Trinity proves his personality. He proceeds from the Father and the Son, and cannot, therefore, be either. To say that an attribute proceeds and comes forth, would be a gross absurdity.

2. Many passages of Scripture are wholly unintelligible, and even absurd, unless the Holy Ghost is allowed to be a person. For as those who take the phrase as ascribing no more than a figurative personality to an attribute, make that attribute to be the energy or power of God, they reduce such passages as the

* *De Baptismo.*

† See Wall's History of Infant Baptism, and Bingham's Antiquities.

following to utter unmeaningness : “ God anointed Jesus with the Holy Ghost and with power,” that is, with the power of God and with power. “ That ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost,” that is, through the power of power. “ In demonstration of the Spirit and of power,” that is, in demonstration of power and of power. And if it should be pleaded, that the last passage is a Hebraism for “ powerful demonstration of the Spirit,” it makes the interpretation still more obviously absurd ; for it would then be “ the powerful demonstration of power.” “ It seemed good to the Holy Ghost,” to the power of God, “ and to us.” “ The Spirit and the bride say, Come,”—the power of God and the bride say, Come. Modern Unitarians, from Dr. Priestley to Mr. Belsham, venture to find fault with the style of the Apostles in some instances ; and those penmen of the Holy Spirit have, indeed, a very unfortunate method of expressing themselves for those who would make them the patrons of Socinianism ; but they would more justly deserve the censures of these judges of the “ words which the Holy Ghost ” taught, had they been really such writers as the Socinian scheme would make them, and of which the above are instances.

3. Personification of any kind is, in some passages in which the Holy Ghost is spoken of, impossible. The reality which this figure of speech is said to present to us is, either some of the attributes of God, or else the doctrine of the Gospel. Let this theory, then, be tried upon the following passages : “ He shall not speak of himself ; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak.” What attribute of God can here be personified ? And if the doctrine of the Gospel be arrayed with personal attributes, where is there an instance of so monstrous a *prosopopœia* as this passage would present ?—the doctrine of the Gospel not speaking “ of himself,” but speaking “ whatsoever he shall hear ! ”—“ The Spirit maketh intercession for us.” What attribute is capable of interceding, or how can the doctrine of the Gospel intercede ? Personification, too, is the language of poetry, and takes place naturally only in excited and elevated discourse ; but if the Holy Spirit be a personification, we find it in the ordinary and cool strain of mere narra-

tion and argumentative discourse in the New Testament, and in the most incidental conversations. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." How impossible is it here to extort, by any process whatever, even the shadow of a personification of either any attribute of God, or of the doctrine of the Gospel! So again: "The Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." Could it be any attribute of God which said this, or could it be the doctrine of the Gospel?

It is in vain, then, to speak of the personification of wisdom in the book of Proverbs, and of charity in the writings of St. Paul; and if even instances of the personification of divine attributes and of the doctrine of the Gospel could be found under this very term, "the Holy Spirit," yet the above texts and numerous other passages, being utterly incapable of being so resolved, would still teach the doctrine of a personal Holy Ghost. The passage on which such interpreters chiefly rely as an instance of the personification of the doctrine of the Gospel is 2 Cor. iii. 6: "Who also hath made us able Ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." To this Witsius well replies:—

"Were we to grant that the Spirit, by a metonymy, denotes the doctrine of the Gospel; what is improperly ascribed there to the Gospel as an exemplary cause, is properly to be attributed to the person of the Holy Spirit, as the principal efficient cause. Thus also that which is elsewhere ascribed to the letter of the law, is, by the same analogy, to be attributed to the person of the lawgiver. But it does not seem necessary for us to make such a concession. The Apostle does not call the law 'the letter,' or the Gospel 'the Spirit;' but teaches that the letter is in the law, and the Spirit in the Gospel, so that they who minister to the law, minister to the letter; they who minister to the Gospel, to the Spirit. He calls that 'the letter,' which is unable at first, and by itself, to convert a man; or to give a sinner the hope of life, much less to quicken him. By 'the Spirit,' he understands both the person of the

Spirit and his quickening grace ; which is clearly disclosed, and rendered efficacious, by means of the Gospel. In a preceding verse, the Apostle undoubtedly distinguishes the Spirit from the doctrine, when he calls the Corinthians, ‘ the epistle of Christ, written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.’ ” *

Finally : That the Holy Ghost is a Person, and not an attribute, is proved by the use of masculine pronouns and relatives in the Greek of the New Testament, in connexion with the neuter noun Πνευμα, “ Spirit ;” and by so many distinct personal acts being ascribed to him, as, “ to come,” “ to go,” “ to be sent,” “ to teach,” “ to guide,” “ to comfort,” “ to make intercession,” “ to bear witness,” “ to give gifts,” “ dividing them to every man as he will,” “ to be vexed,” “ grieved,” and “ quenched.” These cannot be applied to the mere fiction of a person ; and they therefore establish the Spirit’s true personality.

Some additional arguments to those before given to establish the Divinity of the Holy Ghost may also be adduced.

The first is taken from his being the subject of blasphemy : “ The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.” (Matt. xii. 31.) This blasphemy consisted in ascribing his miraculous works to Satan ; and that he is capable of being blasphemed, proves him to be as much a person as the Son ; and it proves him to be divine, because it shows that he may be sinned against, and so sinned against that the blasphemer shall not be forgiven. A person he must be, or he could not be blasphemed ; a divine person he must be, to constitute this blasphemy a sin against him in the proper sense, and of so malignant a kind as to place it beyond the reach of mercy.

He is called God : “ Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost ? Why hast thou conceived this in thine heart ? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.” Ananias is said to have lied particularly “ unto the Holy Ghost,” because the Apostles were under his special direction,

in establishing the temporary regulation among Christians that they should have all things in common: The detection of the crime itself was a demonstration of the Divinity of the Spirit, because it showed his omniscience, his knowledge of the most secret acts. In addition to the proof of his Divinity thus afforded by this history, he is also called God: "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." He is also called the Lord: "Now the Lord is that Spirit." (2 Cor. iii. 17.) He is eternal: "The eternal Spirit." (Heb. ix. 14.) Omnipresence is ascribed to him: "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost." (1 Cor. vi. 19.) "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Rom. viii. 14.) Now, as all true Christians are his temples, and are led by him, he must be present to them at all times, and in all places. He is said to be omniscient: "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. ii. 10.) Here the Spirit is said to search or know "all things," absolutely; and then, to make this more emphatic, that he knows even "the deep things of God," things hidden from every creature, the depths of his essence, and the secrets of his counsels; for, that this is intended, appears from the next verse, where he is said to know the things of God, as the spirit of a man knows the things of a man. Supreme majesty is also attributed to him, so that "to lie to him," to "blaspheme" him, "to vex" him, to do him "despite," are sins, and render the offender liable to divine punishment.

He is the source of inspiration: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter i. 21.) "He shall guide you into all truth." (John xvi. 13.) He is the source and fountain of life: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." (vi. 63.) "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. viii. 11.) As we have seen him acting in the material creation, so he is the Author of the new creation, which is as evidently a work of divine power as the former: "Born of the Spirit:" "The renewing of the Holy Ghost." He is the Author of religious comfort: "The Comforter." The moral attributes of God are also given to him. Holiness,

which includes all in one : “ The Holy Ghost ” is his eminent designation. Goodness and grace are his attributes : “ Thy Spirit is good.” “ The Spirit of grace.” Truth also ; for he is “ the Spirit of truth.”

How impracticable it is to interpret the phrase, “ the Holy Ghost,” as a periphrasis for God himself, has been proved in considering some of the above passages, and will be obvious from the slightest consideration of the texts. A Spirit, which is the Spirit of God ; which is so often distinguished from the Father ; which “ sees ” and “ hears ” the Father ; which searches “ the deep things of God ; ” which is “ sent ” by the Father ; which “ proceedeth ” from him ; and who has special prayer addressed to him at the same time as the Father ; cannot, though “ one with him,” be the Father : And that he is not the Son, is acknowledged on both sides.

As a divine Person, our regards are, therefore, justly due to him as the object of worship and trust, of prayer and blessing ; duties to which we are specially called, both by the general consideration of his Divinity, and by that affectingly benevolent and attractive character under which he is presented to us in the whole Scriptures. In creation, we see him moving upon the face of chaos, and reducing it to a beautiful order ; in providence, “ renewing the face of the earth,” “ garnishing the heavens,” and “ giving life ” to man. In grace, we behold him expanding the prophetic scene to the vision of the Seers of the Old Testament, and making a perfect revelation of the doctrine of Christ to the Apostles of the New. He “ reproveth the world of sin,” and works secret conviction of its evil and danger in the heart. He is “ the Spirit of grace and supplication ; ” the softened heart, the yielding will, all heavenly desires and tendencies, are from him. To the troubled spirits of penitent men, who are led by his influence to Christ, and in whose hearts he has wrought faith, the Spirit hastens with the news of pardon, and bears witness of their sonship with their spirit. He aids their infirmities ; makes intercession for them ; inspires thoughts of consolation and feelings of peace ; plants and perfects in them whatsoever things are pure, and lovely, and honest, and of good report ; delights in his own work in

the renewed heart ; dwells in the soul as in a temple ; and, after having rendered the spirit to God, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, sanctified and meet for heaven, finishes his benevolent and glorious work by raising the bodies of saints in immortal life at the last day. So powerfully does “ the Spirit of glory and of God ” claim our love, our praise, and our obedience ! In the forms of the churches of Christ, in all ages, he has, therefore, been associated with the Father and the Son, in equal glory and blessing ; and where such forms are not in use, this distinct recognition of the Spirit, so much in danger of being neglected, ought, by Ministers, to be most carefully and constantly made, in every gratulatory act of devotion, that so to each Person of the eternal Trinity glory may equally be given “ in the church throughout all ages. Amen.”

The essential and fundamental character of the doctrine of the holy and undivided Trinity has been already stated ; and the more fully the evidences of the Divinity of the Son and of the Spirit are educed from the sacred writings, the more deeply we shall be impressed with this view, and the more binding will be our obligation to “ contend earnestly ” for this part of “ the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Nor can the plea here be ever soundly urged, that this is a merely speculative doctrine ; for, as it has been well observed by a learned writer, “ the truth is, the doctrine of the Trinity is so far from being merely a matter of speculation, that it is the very essence of the Christian religion, the foundation of the whole revelation, and connected with every part of it. All that is peculiar in this religion has relation to the redemption of Christ, and the sanctification of the Spirit. And whosoever is endeavouring to invalidate these articles is overthrowing or undermining the authority of this dispensation, and reducing it to a good moral system only, or treatise of ethics.

“ If the Word, or Logos, who became incarnate, was a created being only, then the mystery of his incarnation, so much insisted on in Scripture, and the love expressed to mankind thereby, so much magnified, dwindle into an interested service ; and a short life of sufferings, concluded, indeed, with a painful death, is rewarded with divine honours, and a crea-

ture advanced thereby to the glory of the Creator: For the command is plain and express, that 'all the angels of God' should 'worship him.' And have not many saints and martyrs undergone the same sufferings, without the like glorious recompence? And is not the advantage to Christ himself, by his incarnation and passion, greater, on this supposition, than to men, for whose sake the sacred writers represent this scheme of mercy undertaken?

"Again: If the motions of the Holy Spirit, so frequently spoken of, are only figurative expressions, and do not necessarily imply any real person who is the author of them, or if this person be only a created being, then we are deprived of all hopes of divine assistance in our spiritual warfare; and have nothing but our own natural abilities wherewith to contend against the world, the flesh, and the devil. And is it not amazing that this article could ever be represented as a mere abstracted speculation, when our deliverance both from the penalty and power of sin does so plainly depend upon it? In the sacred writings, a true faith is made as necessary as a right practice, and this in particular in order to that end. For Arianism, Socinianism, and all those several heresies, of what kind or title soever, which destroy the Divinity of the Son and the Holy Ghost, are, indeed, no other than different schemes of infidelity; since the authority, end, and influence of the Gospel are as effectually made void by disowning the characters in which our Redeemer and Sanctifier are there represented, as even by contesting the evidences of its divine original. These notions plainly rob those two divine Persons of their operations and attributes, and of the honour due to them; lessen the mercy and mystery of the scheme of our salvation; degrade our notion of ourselves and our fellow-creatures; alter the nature of several duties; and weaken those great motives to the observance of all that true Christianity proposes to us."*

* Dodwell.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Fall of Man :—Doctrine of Original Sin.

THE scriptural character of God having been adduced from the inspired writings, we now proceed, in pursuance of our plan, to consider their testimony as to man, both in the estate in which he was first created, and in that lapsed condition into which the first act of disobedience plunged the first pair and their whole posterity.

Besides that natural government of God which is exercised over material things, over mere animals, and over rational beings, considered merely as parts of the great visible creation, which must be conserved and regulated so as to preserve its order and accomplish its natural purposes; there is evidence of the existence of an administration of another kind. This we call “moral government,” because it has respect to the actions of rational creatures, considered as good and evil, which qualities are necessarily determined, at least to us, by a law; and that law, the will of God. Whether things are good or evil, by a sort of eternal fitness or unfitness in themselves, and not made so by the will of God, is a question which has been agitated from the days of the Schoolmen. Like many other similar questions, however, this is a profitless one; for as we cannot comprehend the eternal reason and fitness of things on the whole, we could have no certain means of determining the moral qualities of things, without a declaration of the will of God, who alone knows them both absolutely and relatively, possibly and really, to perfection. As for the distinctions that some things are good or evil antecedently to the will of God; some consequently upon it, and some both one and the other; it may be observed, that, if by “the will of God” we are to understand one of his attributes, nothing can be antecedent to his will; and if we understand it to mean the

declared will of God, in the form of command or law, then nothing can be rewardable or punishable antecedent to the will of God, which only in that form becomes the rule of the conduct of his creatures, and, in all the instances with which we are acquainted, is revealed under the sanction of rewards or punishments.

“But is the will of God the cause of his law? Is his will the original of right and wrong? Is a thing therefore right because God wills it? or does he will it because it is right? I fear this celebrated question is more curious than useful; and perhaps, in the manner in which it is usually treated of, it does not well consist with the regard that is due from a creature to the Creator and Governor of all things. Nevertheless, with awe and reverence we may speak a little.

“It seems, then, that the whole difficulty arises from considering God’s will as distinct from God. Otherwise, it vanishes away: For none can doubt but God is the cause of the law of God. But the will of God is God himself. It is God considered as willing thus and thus; consequently, to say that the will of God, or that God himself, is the cause of law, is one and the same thing.

“Again: If the law, the immutable rule of right and wrong, depends on the nature and fitnesses of things, and on their essential relations to each other; (I do not say their eternal relations, because ‘the eternal relations of things existing in time’ is little less than a contradiction;) if, I say, this depends on the nature and relations of things, then it must depend on God, or the will of God; because those things themselves, with all their relations, are the work of his hands. By his will, for his pleasure alone, they are and were created. And yet it may be granted, which is, probably, all that a considerate person would contend for, that in every particular case God wills thus or thus, (suppose, that men should honour their parents,) because it is right, agreeable to the fitness of things, to the relation in which they stand.”*

All the moral and accountable creatures with which the Scrip-

* Wesley.

tures make us acquainted are angels, devils, and men. The first are inhabitants of heaven, and dwell in the immediate presence of God, though often employed on services to the children of men in this world. The second are represented as being in darkness and punishment, as their general and collective condition ; but still having access to this world by permission of God, for purposes of temptation and mischief, and as waiting for a final judgment and a heavier doom. Whether any other rational beings exist, not included in any of the above classes, dwelling in the planets and other celestial bodies, and regions of space, visible or invisible to us, and collectively forming an immensely extended and immeasurable creation, cannot be certainly determined ; and all that can be said is, that the opinion is favoured by certain natural analogies between the planet we inhabit and other planetary bodies, and between our sun and planetary system and the fixed stars, which are deemed to be solar centres of other planetary systems. But were this established, there is nothing in the fact, as some have supposed, to interfere with any view which the Scriptures give us of the moral government of God as to this world.* Were our race alone in the universe, we should not be greater than we are ; if, on the contrary, we are associated with countless myriads of fellow-rationals in different and distinct residences, we are not thereby minified. If they are under moral government, so are we ; if they are not, which no one can prove, the evidences that we are accountable creatures remain the same. If they have never fallen, the fact of our redemption cannot be affected by that ; and if they need a Saviour, we may well leave the method of providing for their case, or the reasons of their preterition, to the wisdom of God ; it is a fact which we have not before us, and on which we cannot reason. No sinister use at all can be made of the mere probability of the plurality of rational worlds, except to persuade us that we are so little and insignificant as to make it a vain presumption to suppose that we are the objects of divine love. But nothing can be even more unphilosophical than this

* See Part First, chap. 19.

suggestion, since it supposes, that, in proportion as the common Father multiplies his offspring, he must love each individual less, or be more inattentive to his interests; and because it estimates the importance of man by the existence of beings to which he has no relation, rather than by his relation to God, and his own capacity of improvement, pleasure, pain, and immortality. According to this absurd dream of infidelity, every individual in the British empire would annually lose his weight and worth in the sight of his Maker as a moral and intellectual being, because there is a great annual increase of its population.

The law, under which all moral agents are placed, there is reason to believe, is substantially, and in its great principles, the same, and is included in this epitome: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself." For though this is spoken to men, yet, as it is founded, in both its parts, upon the natural relation of every intelligent creature to God and to all other intelligent creatures, it may be presumed to be universal. Every creature owes obedience to God its Maker; and a benevolent Creator could only seek, in the first instance, the obedience of love. Every creature must, from the revealed character of the Creator, be concluded to have been made, not only to show forth his glory, but itself to enjoy happiness. Now the love of God is that affection which unites a created intelligent nature to God, the Source of true happiness; and prevents, in all cases, obedience from being felt as a burden, or regarded under the cold convictions of mere duty. If, therefore, a cheerful obedience from the creature be required as that which would constantly promote by action the felicity of the agent, this law of love is to be considered as the law of all moral beings, whether of angels or of men. Its comprehensiveness is another presumption of its universality; for, unquestionably, it is a maxim of universal import, that "love is the fulfilling of the law," since he who loves must choose to be obedient to every command issued by the Sovereign or the father beloved; and when this love is supreme and uniform, the obedience must be absolute and

unceasing. The second command is also "like unto it" in these respects : It founds itself on the natural relations which exist among the creatures of God, and it comprehends every possible relative duty. All intelligent creatures were intended to live in society. We read of no solitary rational being as placed in any part of the creation. Angels are many, and, from all the representations of Scripture, may be considered as forming one or more collective bodies. When man was created, it was decided that it was not good for him to be alone ; and when "a help meet for him" was provided, they were commanded to be fruitful and multiply, that the number might be increased, and the earth replenished. The very precepts which oblige us to love one another are presumptive that it was the will of God, not merely that his rational creatures should live in society, and do no injury to each other, but that they should be "kindly affectionate one towards another ;" a principle from which all acts of relative duty would spontaneously flow, and which would guard against all hostility, envy, and injury. Thus, by these two great first principles of the divine law, the rational creatures of God would be united to him as their common Lord and Father, and to each other as fellow-subjects and brethren. This view is further supported by the intimations which the Scriptures afford us of the moral state of the only other intelligent class of beings besides man with which we are acquainted. Angels are constantly exhibited as loving God, jealous of his glory, and cheerfully active in the execution of his will ; as benevolent towards each other, and as tenderly affected towards men. Devils, on the contrary, who are "the angels that sinned," are represented as filled with hatred and malice both towards God and towards every holy creature.

Indeed, if rational beings are under a law at all, it cannot be conceived that less than this could be required by the good and holy Being their Creator. They are bound to render all love, honour, and obedience, to him by a natural and absolute obligation ; and, as it has been demonstrated in the experience of man, any thing less would be, not only contrary to the Creator's glory, but fatal to the creature's happiness.

From these views it follows, that all particular precepts of the law, whether they relate to God, or to rational creatures, arise out of one or other of those two great and comprehending commandments; and that every particular law supposes the general one. For as in the Decalogue, and in the writings of the Prophets, are many particular precepts, though in neither are these two great commandments expressly recorded;—and yet our Saviour has told us that “on these two commandments hang all the law and the Prophets;” and the Apostle Paul, that the precepts, “Thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment,” all are “briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;”—we are warranted to conclude, that all moral particular precepts pre-suppose those two general ones, wherever they are found, and to whomsoever they are given.

We may apply this consideration to our first parents in their primitive state. When the law of Moses was given, engraven on tables of stone by the finger of God, law was not first introduced into the world. Men were accounted righteous or wicked between the giving of the law and the flood, and before the flood, and were dealt with accordingly. Noah was “a righteous man,” and the “violence and wickedness” of the antediluvian earth were the causes of its destruction by water. “Enoch walked with God;” Abel was “righteous,” and Cain “wicked.” Now as the moral quality of actions is determined by law, and the moral law is a revelation of the will of God; and as every punitive act on his part, and every bestowment of rewards and favours expressly on account of righteousness, suppose a regal administration; men were under a law up to the time of the fall, which law, in all its particular precepts, did, according to the reasoning of our Lord and St. Paul, given above, pre-suppose the two great commandments. That our first parents were under a law, is evident from the history of the transactions in the garden; but, though but one particular command, in the form of a prohibition, was given, we are not to conclude that this was the compass of their

requirements, and the sole measure of their obedience. It was a particular command, which, like those in the Decalogue, and in the writings of the Prophets, pre-supposed a general law, of which this was but one manifestation. Thus are we conducted to a more ancient date of the divine law than the solemnities of Sinai, or even the creation of man; a law co-eval in its declaration with the date of rational created existence, and in its principles with God himself. "The law of God, speaking after the manner of men, is a copy of the eternal mind, a transcript of the divine nature; yea, it is the fairest offspring of the everlasting Father, the brightest efflux of his essential wisdom, the visible beauty of the Most High; the original idea of truth and good which were lodged in the uncreated mind from eternity."* It is "holy, just, and good."

Under this condition of rational existence must Adam, therefore, and every other moral agent, have come into being; a condition, of course, to which he could not be a party, to which he had no right to be a party, had it been possible, but which was laid upon him; he was made under law, as all his descendants are born under law.†

But that we may more exactly understand man's primitive state, considered morally, and the nature, extent, and consequences, of his fall, it is necessary to consider briefly the history of his creation.

The manner in which this is narrated indicates something peculiar and eminent in the being to be formed. In the heavenly bodies around the earth, and among all the various productions of its surface, vegetable and animal, however perfect in their kinds, and complete, beautiful, and excellent in

* Wesley.

† "The covenant of works," a term much in use among Divines, is one which is not now so common as formerly; but, rightly understood, it has a good sense. The word usually translated "covenant" in the New Testament, more properly signifies a "dispensation" or "appointment," which is, indeed, suited to the majesty of law, and even the authoritative establishment of a sole method of pardon. But in both there are parties, not to their original institution, but to their beneficent accomplishment; and in this view each may be termed a "covenantant."

their respective natures, not one being was found to whom the rest could minister instruction, whom they could call forth into meditation, inspire with moral delight, or lead up to the Creator himself. There was, properly speaking, no intellectual being; none to whom the whole, or even any great number of the parts, of the frame and furniture of material nature could minister knowledge; no one who could employ upon them the generalizing faculty, and make them the basis of inductive knowledge. If, then, it was not wholly for himself that the world was created by God; and angels, if they, as it is indicated in Scripture, had a prior existence, were not so immediately connected with this system, as to lead us to suppose that it was made immediately for them: a rational inhabitant was obviously still wanting to complete the work, and to constitute a perfect whole. The formation of such a being was marked, therefore, by a manner of proceeding which serves to impress us with a sense of the greatness of the work. Not that it could be a matter of more difficulty to Omnipotence to create man than any thing beside; but principally, it is probable, because he was to be the lord of the whole, and to be, therefore, himself accountable to the original Proprietor, and to exhibit the existence of another species of government, a moral administration; and to be the only creature constituted an image of the intellectual and moral perfections, and of the immortality, of the common Maker. Every thing, therefore, as to man's creation is given in a solemn and deliberative form, together with an intimation of a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, all divine, because all equally possessed of creative power, and to each of whom man was to stand in relations so sacred and intimate: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion," &c. In what, then, did this "image" and "likeness" consist?

That human nature has two essential constituent parts, is manifest from the history of Moses:—The body formed out of pre-existent matter, the earth; and a living soul, breathed into the body, by an inspiration from God. "And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed

into his nostrils" (or face) "the breath of life," (lives,) "and man became a living soul." Whatever was thus imparted to the body of man, already formed, and perfectly fashioned in all its parts, was the only cause of life; and the whole tenor of Scripture shows that this was the rational spirit itself, which, by a law of its Creator, was incapable of death, even after the body had fallen under that penalty.

The image or likeness of God in which man was made has, by some, been assigned to the body; by others, to the soul; others, again, have found it in the circumstance of his having dominion over the other creatures. As to the body, it is not necessary to take up any large space to prove, that in no sense can that bear the image of God, that is, be like God. Descant ever so much or ever so poetically upon man's upright and noble form, an upright form has no more likeness to God than a prone or reptile one; God is incorporeal, and has no bodily shape to be the antitype of any thing material.

This also is fatal to the notion, that the image of God in man consisted in the dominion which was granted to him over this lower world. Limited dominion may, it is true, be an image of large and absolute dominion: But man is not said to have been made in the image of God's dominion, which is an accident merely; for, before any creatures existed, God himself could have no dominion; but in the image and likeness of God himself,—of something which constitutes his nature. Still further, man, according to the history, was evidently made in the image of God, "in order" to his having dominion, as the Hebrew particle imports. He who was to have dominion must, necessarily, be made before he could be invested with it; and therefore dominion was consequent to his existing in the image and likeness of God, and could not be that image itself.

The attempts which have been made to fix upon some one essential quality in which to place that image of God in which man was created, is not only uncalled for by any scriptural reason, but is even contradicted by various parts of Scripture, from which alone we can derive our information on this subject. It is in vain to say that this image must be something essen-

tial to human nature, something only which cannot be lost. We shall, it is true, find that the revelation places it in what is essential to human nature ; but that it should comprehend nothing else, or one quality only, has no proof or reason ; and we are, in fact, taught, that it comprises also what is not essential to human nature, and what may be lost and be regained. As to both, the evidence of Scripture is explicit. When God is called “ the Father of spirits,” a likeness is certainly intimated between man and God in the spirituality of their nature. This is also implied in the striking argument of St. Paul with the Athenians : “ Forasmuch then, as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device ;”—plainly referring to the idolatrous statues by which God was represented among Heathens. If likeness to God in man consisted in bodily shape, this would not have been an argument against human representations of the Deity ; but it imports, as Howe well expresses it, that “ we are to understand that our resemblance to him, as we are his offspring, lies in some higher, more noble, and more excellent thing, of which there can be no figure ; as who can tell how to give the figure or image of a thought, or of the mind or thinking power ?” In spirituality, and, consequently, immateriality, this image of God in man, then, in the first existence, consists. Nor is it any valid objection to say, that “ immateriality is not peculiar to the soul of man ; for we have reason to believe that the inferior animals of the earth are actuated by an immaterial principle.” * This is as certain as analogy can make it : But if we allow a spiritual principle to animals, its kind is obviously inferior ; for the spirit which is incapable of continuous induction and moral knowledge, must be of an inferior order to the spirit which possesses these capabilities ; and this is the kind of spirituality which is peculiar to man.

The sentiment expressed in Wisdom ii. 23, is evidence that, in the opinion of the ancient Jews, the image of God in man comprised immortality also : “ For God created man to be im-

* Gleig’s Stackhouse.

mortal, and made him to be an image of his own eternity:" And though other creatures, and even the body of man, were made capable of immortality, and at least the material human frame, whatever we may think of the case of animals, would have escaped death, had not sin entered the world; yet, without running into the absurdity of the "natural immortality" of the human soul, that essence must have been constituted immortal in a high and peculiar sense which has ever retained its prerogative of eternal duration amidst the universal death, not only of animals, but of the bodies of all human beings. To me there appears a manifest allusion to man's immortality, as being included in "the image of God," in the reason which is given in Genesis for the law which inflicts death on murderers: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: For in the image of God made he man." The essence of the crime of homicide cannot be in the putting to death the mere animal part of man; and must, therefore, lie in the peculiar value of life to an immortal being, accountable in another state for the actions done in this, and whose life ought to be specially guarded, for this very reason,—that death introduces him into changeless and eternal relations, which were not to lie at the sport or mercy of human passions.

To these we are to add the intellectual powers, and we have what Divines have called, in perfect accordance with the Scriptures, the "natural image of God in his creature," which is essential and ineffaceable. He was made capable of knowledge, and he was endowed with liberty of will.

This natural image of God in which man was created was the foundation of that moral image by which also he was distinguished. Unless he had been a spiritual, knowing, and willing being, he would have been wholly incapable of moral qualities. That he had such qualities eminently, and that in them consisted the image of God, as well as in the natural attributes just stated, we have also the express testimony of Scripture: "Lo, this only have I found, that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."

The objections taken to this proof are thus satisfactorily answered by President Edwards:—

“It is an observation of no weight which Dr. Taylor makes on this text, that the word ‘man’ is commonly used to signify mankind in general, or mankind collectively taken. It is true, it often signifies the species of mankind; but then it is used to signify the species with regard to its duration and succession from its beginning, as well as with regard to its extent. The English word ‘mankind’ is used to signify the species: But what then? Would it be an improper way of speaking, to say, that when God first made mankind he placed them in a pleasant paradise, (meaning in their first parents,) but now they live in the midst of briers and thorns? And it is certain, that to speak thus of God making mankind,—his giving the species an existence in their first parents, at the creation,—is agreeable to the Scripture use of such an expression. As in Deut. iv. 32: ‘Since the day that God created man upon the earth.’ ‘Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon the earth?’ (Job xx. 4.) ‘I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens.’ (Isaiah xlv. 12.) ‘I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power.’ (Jer. xxvii. 5.) All these texts speak of God making man, signifying the species of mankind; and yet they all plainly have respect to God making man at first, when he ‘made the earth,’ and ‘stretched out the heavens.’ In all these places the same word, ‘Adam,’ is used, as in Ecclesiastes; and in the last of these, used with (*HE emphaticum*) the emphatic sign, as here; though Dr. T omits it when he tells us he gives us a catalogue of all the places in Scripture where the word is used. And it argues nothing to the Doctor’s purpose, that the pronoun ‘they’ is used,—‘They have sought out many inventions.’ This is properly applied to the species, which God made at first upright; the species begun with more than one, and continued in a multitude: As Christ speaks of the two sexes, in the relation of man and wife, continued in successive generations, Matt. xix. 4, ‘He that made them at the beginning made them male and female,’ having reference to Adam and Eve.

“No less impertinent, and also very unfair, is his criticism on the word ישר, translated ‘upright.’ Because the word sometimes signifies ‘right,’ he would from thence infer, that it does not properly signify ‘moral rectitude,’ even when used to express the character of moral agents. He might as well insist, that the English word ‘upright,’ sometimes, and in its most original meaning, signifies ‘right-up,’ or in an erect posture, therefore it does not properly signify any moral character, when applied to moral agents: And indeed less unreasonably; for it is known that in the Hebrew language, in a peculiar manner, most words used to signify moral and spiritual things are taken from external and natural objects. The word ישר, *Jashur*, is used, as applied to moral agents, or to the words and actions of such, (if I have not mis-reckoned,) in about a hundred and ten places in Scripture; and in about a hundred of them, without all dispute, to signify ‘virtue,’ or ‘moral rectitude,’ (though Dr. T. is pleased to say, the word does not generally signify ‘a moral character,’) and for the most part it signifies ‘true virtue,’ or virtue in such a sense as distinguishes it from all false appearances of virtue, or what is only virtue in some respects, but not truly so in the sight of God. It is used at least eighty times in this sense; and scarce any word can be found in the Hebrew language more significant of this. It is thus used constantly in Solomon’s writings, (where it is often found,) when used to express a character or property of moral agents. And it is beyond all controversy, that he uses it in this place (the seventh of Ecclesiastes) to signify ‘moral rectitude,’ or a character of real virtue and integrity. For the wise man is speaking of persons with respect to their moral character, inquiring into the corruption and depravity of mankind, (as is confessed by Dr. T.,) and he here declares, he had not found one among a thousand of the right stamp, truly and thoroughly virtuous and upright: Which appeared a strange thing! But in this text he clears God, and lays the blame on man: Man was not made thus at first. He was made of the right stamp, altogether good in his kind, (as all other things were,) truly and thoroughly virtuous, as he ought to be; ‘but they have sought out many inventions.’ Which

last expression signifies, 'things sinful or morally evil,' as is confessed, page 185. And this expression, used to signify those moral evils he found in man, which he sets in opposition to the uprightness man was made in, shows, that by 'uprightness' he means the most true and sincere goodness. The word rendered 'inventions' most naturally and aptly signifies 'the subtle devices and crooked deceitful ways of hypocrites,' wherein they are of a character contrary to men of simplicity and godly sincerity; who, though wise in that which is good, are simple concerning evil. Thus the same wise man, in Prov. xii. 6, sets a truly good man in opposition to a man of wicked devices, whom God will condemn. Solomon had occasion to observe many who put on an artful disguise and fair show of goodness; but on searching thoroughly, he found very few truly upright. As he says, Proverbs xx. 6, 'Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: But a faithful man who can find?' So that it is exceeding plain, that by 'uprightness,' in this place, (Ecclesiastes vii.,) Solomon means 'true moral goodness.' " *

There is also an express allusion to the moral image of God, in which man was at first created, in Colossians iii. 10: "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that created him;" and, in Ephesians iv. 24: "Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." In these passages the Apostle represents the change produced in true Christians by the Gospel, as a "renewal" of the image of God in man; as a new or second creation in that image; and he explicitly declares, that that image consists in "knowledge," in "righteousness," and in "true holiness." The import of these terms shall be just now considered; but it is here sufficient to observe, that they contain the doctrine of a creation of man in the image of the moral perfections of his Maker.

This also may be finally argued from the satisfaction with which the historian of the creation represents the Creator as viewing the works of his hands as "very good." This is pro-

* Original Sin.

nounced with reference to each individually, as well as to the whole : “ And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.” But, as to man, this goodness must necessarily imply moral as well as physical qualities. Without them he would have been imperfect as man ; and had they existed in him, in their first exercises, perverted and sinful, he must have been an exception, and could not have been pronounced “ very good.” The goodness of man, as a rational being, must lie in a devotedness and consecration to God ; consequently, man was at first devoted to God, otherwise he was not good. A rational creature, as such, is capable of knowing, loving, serving, and living in communion with the Most Holy One. Adam, at first, did or did not use this capacity ; if he did not, he was not “ very good,” nor good at all.

As to the degree of moral perfection in the first man, much scope has been given, in describing it, to a warm imagination, and to much rhetorical embellishment ; and Adam’s perfection has sometimes been placed at an elevation which renders it exceedingly difficult to conceive how he should fall into sin at all ; and especially how he should fall so soon as seems to be represented in the narrative of Moses. On the other hand, those who either deny or hold very slightly the doctrine of our hereditary depravity, delight to represent Adam as little, if at all, superior in moral perfection and capability to his descendants. But, if we attend to the passages of holy writ above quoted, we shall be able, on this subject, to ascertain, if not the exact degree of his moral endowments, yet that there is a certain standard below which he could not be placed, in the perfection of his moral endowments. Generally, he was made in the image of God, which, we have already proved, is to be understood morally as well as naturally. Now, however the image of any thing may be reduced in extent, it must still be an accurate representation as far as it goes. Every thing good in the creation must always be a miniature representation of the excellence of the Creator ; but, in this case, the goodness, that is, the perfection, of every creature, according to the part it was designed to act in the general assemblage of beings collected into our system, wholly forbids us to suppose, that the

image of God's moral perfections in man was a blurred and dim representation. To whatever extent it went, it necessarily excluded all that from man which did not resemble God ; it was a likeness to God in "righteousness and true holiness," whatever the degree of each might be, which excluded all admixture of unrighteousness and unholiness. The first part of our conclusion, therefore, is, that man, in his original state, was sinless, both in act and in principle. "God made man upright." That this signifies "moral rectitude" has been already established ; but the import of the word is very extensive. It expresses, by an easy figure, the exactness of truth, justice, and obedience ; and it comprehends the state and habit both of the heart and the life. Such, then, was the state of primitive man ; there was no obliquity of his moral principles, his mind, and affections ; none in his conduct. He was perfectly sincere and exactly just, rendering from the heart all that was due to God and to the creature. Tried by the exactest plummet, he was upright ; by the most perfect rule, he was straight.

The "knowledge" in which the Apostle Paul, in the passage quoted above from Colossians iii. 10, places "the image of God" after which man was created, does not merely imply the faculty of the understanding, which is a part of the natural image of God ; but that which might be lost, because it is that in which the new man is "renewed." It is, therefore, to be understood of the faculty of knowledge in the right exercise of its original power ; and of that willing reception, and firm retaining, and hearty approval, of religious truth, in which knowledge, when spoken of morally, is always understood in the Scriptures. We may not be disposed to allow, with some, that he understood the deep philosophy of nature, and could comprehend and explain the sublime mysteries of religion. The circumstance of his giving names to the animals, is certainly no sufficient proof of his having attained to a philosophical acquaintance with their qualities and distinguishing habits, though we should allow the names to be still retained in the Hebrew, and to be as expressive of their peculiarities as some expositors have stated. No sufficient time appears to

have been afforded him for the study of their properties, as this event took place previous to the formation of Eve; and as for the notion of his acquiring knowledge by intuition, it is contradicted by the revealed fact, that angels themselves acquire their knowledge by observation and study, though, no doubt, with greater rapidity and certainty than we. The whole of the transaction was supernatural; the beasts were brought to Adam, and it is probable that he named them under a divine impulse. He has been supposed to be the inventor of language; but the history shows that he was never without language. He was from the first able to converse with God; and we may therefore infer that language was in him a supernatural and miraculous endowment. That his understanding was, as to its capacity, deep and large beyond any of his posterity, must follow from the perfection in which he was created; and his acquisitions of knowledge would therefore be rapid and easy. It was, however, in moral and religious truth, as being of the first concern to him, that we are to suppose the excellency of his knowledge to have consisted. "His reason would be clear, his judgment uncorrupted, and his conscience upright and sensible."* The best knowledge would, in him, be placed first; and that of every other kind be made subservient to it, according to its relation to that. The Apostle adds to knowledge, "righteousness and true holiness;" terms which express, not merely freedom from sin, but positive and active virtues.

"A rational creature thus made must not only be innocent and free, but must be formed holy. His will must have an inward bias to virtue; he must have an inclination to please that God who made him, a supreme love to his Creator, a zeal to serve him, and a tender fear of offending him.

"For either the new created man loved God supremely, or not. If he did not, he was not innocent, since the law of nature requires a supreme love to God. If he did, he stood ready for every act of obedience: And this is true holiness of heart. And indeed, without this, how could a God of holiness love the work of his own hands?

* Dr. Watts.

“There must be also in this creature a regular subjection of the inferior powers to the superior sense ; and appetite and passion must be subject to reason. The mind must have a power to govern these lower faculties, that he might not offend against the law of his creation.

“He must also have his heart inlaid with love to the creatures, especially those of his own species, if he should be placed among them ; and with a principle of honesty and truth in dealing with them. And if many of those creatures were made at once, there would be no pride, malice, or envy, no falsehood, no brawls, or contentions among them, but all harmony and love.”*

Sober as these views are of man’s primitive state, it is not, perhaps, possible for us fully to conceive of so exalted a condition as even this. Below this standard it could not fall : And that it implied a glory, and dignity, and moral greatness of a very exalted kind, is made sufficiently apparent from the degree of guilt charged upon Adam when he fell ; for the aggravating circumstances of his offence may well be deduced from the tremendous consequences which followed.

The creation of man in the moral image of God being so clearly stated in the Scriptures, it would be difficult to conceive in what manner their testimony, on this point, could be evaded, did we not know the readiness with which some minds form objections, and how little ingenuity is required to make objections plausible. The objection to this clearly revealed truth is thus stated by Dr. Taylor, of Norwich, and it has been followed in substance, and with only some variation of phrase, by the Socinians of the present day : “Adam could not be originally created in righteousness and true holiness ; because habits of holiness cannot be created without our knowledge, concurrence, or consent ; for holiness in its nature implies the choice and consent of a moral agent, without which it cannot be holiness.” If, however, it has been established that God made man “upright ;” that he was created in “knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness ;” and that at his creation he

was pronounced “very good;” all this falls to the ground, and is the vain reasoning of man against the explicit testimony of God. The fallacy is, however, easily detected. It lies in confounding habits of holiness with the principle of holiness. Now, though habit is the result of acts, and acts of voluntary choice; yet, if the choice be a right one, (and right it must be in order to an act of holiness,) and if this right choice, frequently exerted, produces so many acts as shall form what is called “a habit,” then, either the principle from which that right choice arises must be good, or bad, or neither. If neither, a right choice has no cause at all; if bad, a right choice could not originate from it; if good, then there may be a holy principle in man, a right nature, before choice, and so that part of the argument falls to the ground. Now, in Adam, that rectitude of principle from which a right choice and right acts flowed, was either created with him, or formed by his own volitions. If the latter be affirmed, then he must have willed right before he had a principle of rectitude, which is absurd; if the former, then his creation in a state of moral rectitude, with an aptitude and disposition to good, is established.

Mr. Wesley thus answers the objection:—

“What is holiness? Is it not essentially love? the love of God and of all mankind? love producing ‘bowels of mercies,’ humbleness of mind, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering? And cannot God shed abroad this love in any soul, without his concurrence, antecedent to his knowledge or consent? And supposing this to be done, will love change its nature? will it be no longer holiness? This argument can never be sustained; unless you would play with the word ‘habits.’ Love is holiness wherever it exists. And God could create either men or angels, endued, from the very first moment of their existence, with whatsoever degree of love he pleased.

“You ‘think, on the contrary, it is demonstration, that we cannot be righteous or holy, we cannot observe what is right, without our own free and explicit choice.’ I suppose you mean, ‘practise’ what is right. But a man may be righteous, before he does what is right; holy in heart, before he is holy

in life. The confounding these two all along, seems the ground of your strange imagination, that Adam ‘must choose to be righteous, ~~must~~ exercise thought and reflection, before he could be righteous.’ Why so? ‘Because righteousness is the right use and application of our powers.’ Here is your capital mistake. No, it is not: It is the right state of our powers. It is the right disposition of our soul, the right temper of our mind. Take this with you, and you will no more dream, that ‘God could not create man in righteousness and true holiness.’”*

President Edwards’s answer is,—

“I think it a contradiction to the nature of things as judged of by the common sense of mankind. It is agreeable to the sense of men, in all nations and ages, not only that the fruit or effect of a good choice is virtuous, but that the good choice itself, from whence that effect proceeds, is so; yea, also the antecedent good disposition, temper, or affection of mind, from whence proceeds that good choice, is virtuous. This is the general notion, not that principles derive their goodness from actions, but that actions derive their goodness from the principles whence they proceed; so that the act of choosing what is good, is no further virtuous, than it proceeds from a good principle, or virtuous disposition of mind: Which supposes, that a virtuous disposition of mind may be before a virtuous act of choice; and that, therefore, it is not necessary there should first be thought, reflection, and choice, before there can be any virtuous disposition. If the choice be first, before the existence of a good disposition of heart, what is the character of that choice? There can, according to our natural notions, be no virtue in a choice which proceeds from no virtuous principle, but from mere self-love, ambition, or some animal appetites; therefore, a virtuous temper of mind may be before a good act of choice, as a tree may be before the fruit, and the fountain before the stream which proceeds from it.”†

The final cause of man’s creation was the display of the

* Original Sin.

† Original Sin.

glory of God, and principally of his moral perfections. Among those, benevolence shone with eminent lustre. The creation of rational and holy creatures was the only means, as it appears to us, of accomplishing that most paternal and benevolent design,—to impart to other beings a portion of the divine felicity. The happiness of God is the result of his moral perfection, and it is complete and perfect. It is also specific ; it is the felicity of knowledge, of conscious rectitude, of sufficiency, and independence. Of the two former, creatures were capable ; but only rational creatures. Matter, however formed, is unconscious, and is and must for ever remain incapable of happiness. However disposed and adorned, it was made for another, and not at all with reference to itself. If it be curiously wrought, it is for some other's wonder ; if it has use, it is for another's convenience ; if it has beauty, it is for another's eye ; if harmony, it is for another's ear. Irrational animate creatures may derive advantage from mere matter ; but it does not appear that they are conscious of it. They have the enjoyment of sense, but not the powers of reflection, comparison, and taste. They see without admiration, they combine nothing into relations. So to know, as to be conscious of knowing, and to feel the pleasures of knowledge ; so to know, as to impart knowledge to others ; so to know, as to lay the basis of future and enlarging knowledge, as to discover the efficient and the final causes of things ; and to enjoy the pleasures of discovery and certainty, of imagination and taste, —this is peculiar to rational beings. Above all, to know the great Creator and Lord of all ; to see the distinctions of right and wrong, of good and evil in his law ; to have, therefore, the consciousness of integrity and of well-ordered and perfectly-balanced passions ; to feel the felicity of universal and unbounded benevolence ; to be conscious of the favour of God himself ; to have perfect confidence in his care and constant benediction ; to adore him ; to be grateful ; to exert hope without limit on future and unceasing blessings ; all these sources of felicity were added to the pleasures of intellect and imagination in the creation of rational beings. In whatever part of the universe they were created and placed, we have

sufficient reason to believe that this was the primitive condition of all ; and we know, assuredly, from God's own revelation, that it was the condition of man. In his creation and primeval condition, the " kindness and love of God " eminently appeared. He was made a rational and immortal spirit, with no limits to the constant enlargement of his powers ; for, from all the evidence that our own consciousness, even in our fallen state, affords us, it appears possible to the human soul to be eternally approaching the Infinite in intellectual strength and attainment. He was made holy and happy ; he was admitted to intercourse with God. He was not left alone, but had the pleasure of society. He was placed in a world of grandeur, harmony, beauty, and utility ; it was canopied with other distant worlds, to exhibit to his very sense a manifestation of the extent of space and the vastness of the varied universe ; and to call both his reason, his fancy, and his devotion into their most vigorous and salutary exercises. He was placed in a paradise, where, probably, all that was sublime and gentle in the scenery of the whole earth was exhibited in pattern ; and all that could delight the innocent sense, and excite the curious inquiries of the mind, was spread before him. He had labour to employ his attention, without wearying him ; and time for his highest pursuits of knowing God, his will and his works. All was a manifestation of universal love, of which he was the chief visible object ; and the felicity and glory of his condition must, by his and their obedience in succession, have descended to his posterity for ever. Such was our world, and its rational inhabitants, the first pair ; and thus did its creation manifest, not only the power and wisdom, but the benevolence, of Deity. He made them like himself, and he made them capable of a happiness like his own.

The case of man is now so obviously different, that the change cannot be denied. The scriptural method of accounting for this is the disobedience of our first parents ; and the visitation of their sin upon their posterity, in the altered condition of the material world, in the corrupt moral state in which men are born, and in that afflictive condition which is universally imposed upon them. The testimony of the sacred

writings to what is called, in theological language, “the fall of man,”* is, therefore, to be next considered.

The Mosaic account of this event is, that a garden having been planted by the Creator, for the use of man, he was placed in it, “to dress it, and to keep it;” that in this garden two trees were specially distinguished, one as “the tree of life;” the other, as “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil;” that from eating of the latter, Adam was restrained by positive interdict, and by the penalty, “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;” that the serpent, who was more subtle than any beast of the field, tempted the woman to eat, by denying that death would be the consequence, and by assuring her, that her eyes and her husband’s eyes would be opened, and that they would “be as gods, knowing good and evil;” that the woman took of the fruit, gave of it to her husband, who also ate; and that, for this act of disobedience, they were expelled from the garden, made subject to death, and laid under other maledictions.

That this history should be the subject of much criticism, not only by infidels, whose objections to it have been noticed in the first part of this work, but by those who hold false and perverted views of the Christian system, was to be expected. Taken in its natural and obvious sense, along with the comments of the subsequent scriptures, it teaches the doctrines of the existence of an evil, tempting, invisible spirit, going about, seeking whom he may deceive and devour; of the introduction of a state of moral corruptness into human nature, which has been transmitted to all men; and of a vicarious atonement for sin; and, wherever the fundamental truths of the Christian system are denied, attempts will be made so to interpret this part of the Mosaic history as to obscure the testimony which it gives to them, either explicitly, or by just induction. Interpreters of this account of the lapse of the first pair, and the origin of evil, as to the human race, have adopted various and often strange theories; but those whose opinions it seems

* This phrase does not occur in the canonical Scriptures; but is, probably, taken from Wisdom x. 1: “She preserved the first-formed father of the world that was created, and brought him out of his fall.”

necessary to notice may be divided into those who deny the literal sense of the relation entirely ; those who take the account to be in part literal and in part allegorical ; and those who, whilst they contend earnestly for the literal interpretation of every part of the history, consider some of the terms used, and some of the persons introduced, as conveying a meaning more extensive than the letter, and as constituting several symbols of spiritual things and of spiritual beings.

Those who have denied the literal sense entirely, and regard the whole relation as an instructive *mythos*, or “fable,” have, as might be expected, when all restraint of authority was thus thrown off from the imagination, adopted very different interpretations. Thus we have been taught, that this account was intended to teach the evil of yielding to the violence of appetite, and to its control over reason ; or the introduction of vice in conjunction with knowledge and the artificial refinements of society ; or the necessity of keeping the great mass of mankind from acquiring too great a degree of knowledge, as being hurtful to society ; or as another version of the story of the golden age, and its being succeeded by times more vicious and miserable ; or as designed, enigmatically, to account for the origin of evil, or of mankind. This catalogue of opinions might be much enlarged : Some of them have been held by mere visionaries ; others, by men of learning, especially by several of the semi-infidel theologians and biblical critics of Germany ; and our own country has not been exempt from this class of free expositors. How to fix upon the moral of the fable is, however, the difficulty ; and this variety of opinion is a sufficient refutation of the general notion assumed by the whole class, since scarcely can two of them be found who adopt the same interpretation, after they have discarded the literal acceptance.

But that the account of Moses is to be taken as a matter of real history, and according to its literal import, is established by two considerations, against which, as being facts, nothing can successfully be urged. The first is, that the account of the fall of the first pair is a part of a continuous history. The creation of the world, of man, of woman ; the planting of the

garden of Eden, and the placing of man there ; the duties and prohibitions laid upon him ; his disobedience ; his expulsion from the garden ; the subsequent birth of his children, their lives and actions, and those of their posterity, down to the flood ; and, from that event, to the life of Abraham,—are given in the same plain and unadorned narrative, brief, but yet simple, and with no intimation at all, either from the elevation of the style or otherwise, that a fable or allegory is in any part introduced. If this, then, be the case, and the evidence of it lies upon the very face of the history, it is clear, that if the account of the fall be excerpted from the whole narrative as allegorical, any subsequent part, from Abel to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Moses, may be excerpted for the same reason ; which is neither more nor less than this, that it does not agree with the theological opinions of the interpreter ; and thus the whole of the Pentateuch may be rejected as a history, and converted into fable. One of these consequences must, therefore, follow, either that the account of the fall must be taken as history, or the historical character of the whole five books of Moses must be unsettled ; and if none but infidels will go to the latter consequence, then no one who admits the Pentateuch to be a true history generally, can consistently refuse to admit the story of the fall of the first pair to be a narrative of real occurrences, because it is written in the same style, and presents the same character of a continuous record of events. So conclusive has the argument been felt, that the anti-literal interpreters have endeavoured to evade it, by asserting that the part of the history of Moses in question bears marks of being a separate fragment, more ancient than the Pentateuch itself, and transcribed into it by Moses, the author and compiler of the whole. This point is examined and satisfactorily refuted in the learned and excellent work referred to below ;* but it is easy to show, that it would amount to nothing, if granted, in the mind of any who is satisfied on the previous question of the inspiration of the

* Holden's *Dissertation on the Fall of Man*, chap. ii. In this volume the literal sense of the Mosaic account of the fall is largely investigated and ably established.

holy Scriptures. For let it be admitted that Moses, in writing the pentateuchal history, availed himself of the traditions of the patriarchal ages,—a supposition not in the least inconsistent with his inspiration, or with the absolute truth of his history, since the traditions so introduced have been authenticated by the Holy Spirit; or let it be supposed, which is wholly gratuitous, that he made use of previously-existing documents, and that some differences of style in his books may be traced that serve to point out his quotations, which also is an assumption, or rather a position, that some of the best Hebraists have denied; yet two things are to be noted: First, that the inspired character of the books of Moses is authenticated by our Lord and his Apostles, so that they must necessarily be wholly true, and free from real contradictions; and, secondly, that to make it any thing to their purpose who contend that the account of the fall is an older document introduced by Moses, it ought to be shown, that it is not written as truly in the narrative style, even if it could be proved to be in some respects a different style, as that which precedes and follows it. Now the very literal character of our translation will enable even the unlearned reader to discover this. Whether it be an embodied tradition or the insertion of a more ancient document, (though there is no foundation at all for the latter supposition,) it is obviously a narrative, and a narrative as simple as any which precedes or follows it.

The other indisputable fact to which I just now adverted, as establishing the literal sense of the history, is that, as such, it is referred to and reasoned upon in various parts of Scripture.

“Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?” (Job xx. 4, 5.) The first part of the quotation “might as well have been rendered, ‘since Adam was placed on the earth.’ There is no reason to doubt but that this passage refers to the fall and the first sin of man. The date agrees; for the knowledge here taught is said to arise from facts as old as the first placing man upon earth; and the sudden punishment of the iniquity corresponds

to the Mosaic account,—‘the triumphing of the wicked is short, his joy but for a moment.’”*

“If I covered my transgression as Adam, by hiding my iniquity in my bosom.” (Job xxxi. 33.) Magee renders the verse,—

“Did I cover, like Adam, my transgression,
By hiding in a lurking place mine iniquity?”

and adds, “I agree with Peters, that this contains a reference to the history of the first man, and his endeavours to hide himself after his transgression.”† Our margin reads, “after the manner of men;” and also the old versions; but the Chaldee paraphrase agrees with our translation, which is also satisfactorily defended by numerous critics.

“What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?” (Job xv. 14.) Why not clean? Did God make woman or man unclean at the beginning? If he did, the expostulation would have been more apposite, and much stronger, had the true cause been assigned, and Job had said, “How canst thou expect cleanness in man, whom thou createdst unclean?” But, as the case now stands, the expostulation has a plain reference to the introduction of vanity and corruption by the sin of the woman, and is an evidence that this ancient writer was sensible of the evil consequences of the fall upon the whole race of man. “Eden” and “the garden of the Lord” are also frequently referred to in the Prophets. We have the “tree of life” mentioned several times in the Proverbs and in the Revelation. “God,” says Solomon, “made man upright.” The enemies of Christ and his church are spoken of, both in the Old and New Testaments, under the names of “the serpent,” and “the dragon;” and the habit of the serpent to lick the dust is also referred to by Isaiah.

If the history of the fall, as recorded by Moses, were an allegory, or any thing but a literal history, several of the above allusions would have no meaning; but the matter is put

* Sherlock On Prophecy.

† Discourses on the Atonement.

beyond all possible doubt in the New Testament, unless the same culpable liberties be taken with the interpretation of the words of our Lord and of St. Paul as with those of the Jewish lawgiver. Our Lord says, "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female; and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh?" (Matt. xix. 4, 5.) This is an argument on the subject of divorces, and its foundation rests upon two of the facts recorded by Moses: 1. That God made at first but two human beings, from whom all the rest have sprung. 2. That the intimacy and indissolubility of the marriage relation rests upon the formation of the woman from the man; for our Lord quotes the words in Genesis, where the obligation of man to cleave to his wife is immediately connected with that circumstance: "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." This is sufficiently in proof that both our Lord and the Pharisees considered this early part of the history of Moses as a narrative; for otherwise it would neither have been a reason, on his part, for the doctrine which he was inculcating, nor have had any force of conviction as to them. "In Adam," says the Apostle Paul, "all die;" "by one man sin entered into the world." "But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." In the last passage, the instrument of the temptation is said to be a serpent, *οφεις*, which is a sufficient answer to those who would make it any other animal; and Eve is represented as being first seduced, according to the account in Genesis. This St. Paul repeats in 1 Tim. ii. 13, 14: "Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived," (first, or immediately,) "but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." And he offers this as the reason of his injunction, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection." When, therefore, it is considered, that these passages

are introduced, not for rhetorical illustration, or in the way of classical quotation, but are made the basis of grave and important reasonings, which embody some of the most important doctrines of the Christian revelation, and of important social duties and points of Christian order and decorum; it would be to charge the writers of the New Testament with the grossest absurdity, with even culpable and unworthy trifling, to suppose them to argue from the history of the fall as a narrative, when they knew it to be an allegory: And if we are, therefore, compelled to allow that it was understood as a real history by our Lord and his inspired Apostles, those speculations of modern critics, which convert it into a parable, stand branded with their true character of infidel and semi-infidel temerity.

The objections which are made to the historical character of this account are either those of open unbelievers and scoffers, or such as are founded precisely upon the same allegations of supposed absurdity and unsuitableness to which such persons resort, and which suppose that man is a competent judge of the proceedings of his Maker, and that the latter ought to regulate his conduct and requirements by what the former may think fit or unfit. If the literal interpretation of the first chapter in Genesis could be proved inconsistent with other parts of holy writ, then, indeed, we should be compelled to adopt the mode of explanation by allegory; but if no reason more weighty can be offered for so violent a proceeding, than that men either object to the doctrines which the literal account includes; or that the recorded account of the actual dealings of God with the first man does not comport with their notions of what was fit in such circumstances, we should hold truth with little tenacity, were we to surrender it to the enemy upon such a summons. The fallacy of most of these objections is, however, easily pointed out. We are asked, first, "Is it reasonable to suppose, that the fruit of the tree of life could confer immortality?" But though Adam was made exempt from death, yet what is there irrational in supposing, that the fruit of a tree should be the appointed instrument of preserving his health, repairing the wastes of his animal nature, and of main-

taining him in perpetual youth? Almighty God could have accomplished this end without means, or by other means; but since he so often employs instruments, it is not more strange that he should ordain to preserve Adam permanently from death by food of a special quality, than that now he should preserve men in health and life, for threescore years and ten, by specific foods; and that, to counteract disorders, he should have given specific medicinal qualities to herbs and minerals: Or if, with some, we regard the eating of the tree of life as a sacramental act, an expression of faith in the promise of continued preservation, and a means through which the conserving influence of God was bestowed, (a notion, however, not so well founded as the other,) it is yet not inconsistent with the literal interpretation, and involves no really unreasonable consequence, and nothing directly contrary to the analogy of faith. It has been, also, foolishly enough asked, "Can the fruit of the prohibited tree, or of any tree, be supposed to have communicated 'knowledge of good and evil,' or have had any effect at all upon the intellectual powers?" But this is not the idea conveyed by the history, however literally taken; and the objection is groundless. That tree might surely, without the least approach to allegory, be called "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," whether we understand by this, that by eating it man came to know, by sad experience, the value of the "good" he had forfeited, and the bitterness of "evil" which he had before known only in name; or, as others have understood it, that it was appointed to be the test of Adam's fidelity to his Creator, and, consequently, was a tree of the knowledge of good and evil, a tree for the purpose of knowing (or making known) whether he would cleave to the former, or make choice of the latter. The first of these interpretations is, I think, to be preferred, because it better harmonizes with the whole history; but either of them is consistent with a literal interpretation, and cannot be proved to involve any real absurdity.

To the account of the serpent, it has been objected that, taken literally, it makes the invisible tempter assume the body of an animal to carry on his designs: But we must be better

acquainted with the nature and laws of disembodied spirits before we can prove this to be impossible, or even unlikely; and as for an animal being chosen as the means of approach to Eve, without exciting suspicion, it is manifest that, allowing a superior spirit to be the real tempter, it was good policy in him to address Eve through an animal which she must have noticed as one of the inhabitants of the garden, rather than in a human form, when she knew that herself and her husband were the only human beings as yet in existence. The presence of such a stranger would have been much more likely to put her on her guard. But, then, we are told that the animal was a contemptible reptile. Certainly not before he was degraded in form; but, on the contrary, one of the “beasts of the earth,” and not a “creeping thing;” and also more “subtle,” more discerning and sagacious, “than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made,”—consequently the head of all the inferior animals in intellect, and not unlikely to have been of a corresponding noble and beautiful form; for this, indeed, his bodily degradation imports.* If there was policy, then, in Satan’s choosing an animal as the instrument by which he might make his approaches, there was as much good taste in his selection as the allegorists, who seem anxious on this point, can wish for him. The speaking of the serpent is another stumbling-block; but, as the argument is not here with an infidel, but with those who profess to receive the Mosaic record as divine, the speaking of the serpent is no more a reason for interpreting the relation allegorically, than the speaking of the ass of Balaam can be for allegorizing the whole of that transaction. That a good or an evil spirit has no power to produce articulate sounds from the organs of an animal, no philosophy can prove; and it is a fact which is, therefore, capable of being rationally substantiated by testimony. There is a clear reason,

* We have no reason at all to suppose, as it is strangely done almost uniformly by commentators, that this animal had the serpentine form in any mode or degree at all before his transformation. That he was then degraded to a reptile, to go “upon his belly,” imports, on the contrary, an entire alteration and loss of the original form,—a form of which it is clear no idea can now be conceived.

too, for this use of the power of Satan in the story itself. By his giving speech to the serpent, and representing that, as appears from the account, as a consequence of the serpent having himself eaten of the fruit,* he took the most effectual means of impressing Eve with the dangerous and fatal notion, that the prohibition of the tree of knowledge was a restraint upon her happiness and intellectual improvement, and thus to suggest hard thoughts of her Maker. The objection, that Eve manifested no surprise when she heard an animal speak that she must have known not to have had that faculty before, has also no weight, since that circumstance might have occurred without being mentioned in so brief a history. It is still more likely that Adam should have expressed some marks of surprise and anxiety too, when his wife presented the fruit to him, though nothing of the kind is mentioned. But allowing that no surprise was indicated by the woman, the answer of the author just quoted is satisfactory:—

“ In such a state, reason must enjoy a calm dominion ; and consequently there was no room for those sudden starts of imagination, or those sudden tumults, agitation, failures, and stagnations of the blood and spirits now incident to human nature ; and therefore Eve was incapable of fear or surprise from such accidents as would disquiet the best of her posterity. This objection, then, is so far from prejudicing the truth of the Mosaic history, that to me I own it a strong presumption in its favour.

“ But, after all, if this objection has any weight with any

* “ ‘And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food,’ &c. Now, Eve could plainly know, by her senses, that the fruit was desirable to the eye, but it was impossible she could know that it was good for food, but from the example and experiment of the serpent. It was also impossible she could know that it was desirable to make use of it, but by the example of the serpent, whom she saw from a brute become a rational and vocal creature, as she thought, by eating that fruit. The text says, she saw it was good for food, and that it was desirable to make wise ; and seeing does not imply conjecture or belief, but certain knowledge,—knowledge founded upon evidence and proof ; such proof as she had then before her eyes. And when once we are sure that she had this proof, as it is evident she had, the whole conference between her and the serpent is as rational and intelligible as any thing in the whole Scriptures.”—*DELANY'S Dissertations.*

one, let him consider what there is in this philosophic serenity of our first parent, supposing the whole of her conduct on this occasion fully related to us, so far exceeding the serenity of Fabricius, upon the sudden appearance and cry of the elephant contrived by Pyrrhus to discompose him, or the steadiness of Brutus upon the appearance of his evil genius ; and yet I believe Plutarch no way suffers in his credit as an historian by the relation of those events ; at least had he related those surprising accidents without saying one word of what effects they had upon the passions of the persons concerned, his relations had certainly been liable to no imputation of incredibility or improbability upon that account.”*

An objection is taken to the justice of the sentence pronounced on the serpent, if the transaction be accounted real, and if that animal were but the unconscious instrument of the great seducer. To this the reply is obvious, that it could be no matter of just complaint to the serpent that its form should be changed, and its species lowered in the scale of being. It had no original right to its former superior rank, but held it at the pleasure of the Creator. If special pain and sufferings had been inflicted upon the serpent, there would have been a semblance of plausibility in the objection ; but the serpent suffered, as to liability to pain and death, no more than other animals, and was not, therefore, any more than another irrational creature, accounted a responsible offender. Its degradation was evidently intended as a memento to man, and the real punishment, as we shall show, fell upon the real transgressor, who used the serpent as his instrument ; whilst the enmity of the whole race of serpents to the human race, their cunning, and their poisonous qualities, appear to have been wisely and graciously intended as standing warnings to us to beware of that great spiritual enemy, who ever lies in wait to wound and to destroy.

These are the principal objections made to the literal interpretation of this portion of the Mosaic record ; and we have seen that they are either of no weight in themselves, or that

* Revelation Examined.

they cannot be entertained without leading to a total disregard of other parts of the inspired Scriptures. Tradition, too, comes in to the support of the literal sense, and on such a question has great weight. The Apocryphal writings afford a satisfactory testimony of the sentiments of the Jews: "O Lord, who bearest rule, thou spakest at the beginning, when thou didst plant the earth, and that thyself alone, and commandedst the people, and gavest a body unto Adam without soul, which was the workmanship of thine hands, and didst breathe into him the breath of life, and he was made living before thee. And thou leddest him into Paradise, which thy right hand had planted. And unto him thou gavest commandment to love thy way; which he transgressed, and immediately thou appointedst death in him and in his generations, of whom came nations, tribes, people, and kindreds, out of number." (2 Esdras iii. 4—7.) "O thou Adam, what hast thou done? for though it was thou that sinned, thou art not fallen alone, but we all that come of thee." (2 Esdras vii. 48.) "Nevertheless through envy of the devil came death into the world." (Wisdom ii. 24.) "She" (wisdom) "preserved the first-formed father of the world, that was created alone, and brought him out of his fall." (Wisdom x. 1.) "The Lord created man of the earth, and turned him into it again. He gave them few days, and a short time, and power also over the things therein. He filled them with the knowledge of understanding, and showed them good and evil." (Ecclus. xvii. 1, &c.) By these ancient Jewish writers it is, therefore, certain, that the account of the fall was understood as the narrative of a real transaction; and, except on this assumption, it is impossible to account for those traditions which are embodied in the mythology of almost all pagan nations. Of these fables the basis must have been some fact, real or supposed; for as well might we expect the fables of Æsop to have impressed themselves on the religious ceremonies and belief of nations, as the Mosaic fable of man's fall; for a mere fable it must be accounted, if it is to lose its literal interpretation.

Popular convictions everywhere prevailed of the existence of some beings of the higher order, who had revolted from

their subjection to the heavenly power which presided over the universe ; and upon them were raised many fabulous stories. It is probable that these convictions were originally founded on the circumstances referred to in Scripture with respect to Satan and his angels, as powerful malevolent beings, who, having first seduced Adam from his obedience, incessantly laboured to deceive, corrupt, and destroy his descendants. The notion of the Magi of Plutarch, and of the Manicheans, concerning two independent principles, acting in opposition to each other, was also founded on the real circumstances of the apostasy of angels, and of their interference and influence in the affairs of men. The fictions of Indian mythology with regard to contending powers, and their subordinate ministers, benevolent and malignant, were erected on the same basis of truth ; and the Grecian and Roman accounts of the battles of the giants against Jupiter were, perhaps, built on the corruptions of tradition on this point.

“ The original temptation, by which Satan drew our first-parents from their duty, and led them to transgress the only prohibition which God had imposed, is described in the first pages of Scripture ; and it is repeated, under much disguise, in many fables of classical mythology.

“ Origen considers the allegorical relations furnished by Plato, with respect to Porus tempted by Penia to sin when intoxicated in the garden of Jove, as a disfigured history of the fall of man in Paradise. It seems to have been blended with the story of Lot and his daughters. Plato might have acquired in Egypt the knowledge of the original circumstances of the fall, and have produced them, under the veil of allegory, that he might not offend the Greeks by a direct extract from the Jewish Scriptures. The heathen notions with respect to the Elysian fields, the garden of Adonis, and that of Hesperides, in which the fruit was watched by a serpent, were, probably, borrowed from the sacred accounts, or from traditional reports with respect to Paradise.

“ The worship established towards the evil spirit by his contrivance, sometimes under the very appearance in which he seduced our first parents, is to be found among the Phenicians

and Egyptians. The general notion of the serpent as a mysterious symbol annexed to the heathen deities, and the invocation of Eve in the Bacchanalian orgies, (with the production of a serpent, consecrated as an emblem, to public view,) seems to bear some relation to the history of the first temptation, which introduced sin and death into the world. The account of Discord being cast out from heaven, referred to by Agamemnon, in the nineteenth book of Homer's *Iliad*, has been thought to be a corrupt tradition of the fall of the evil angels. Claudian shows an acquaintance with the circumstances of the seduction of man, and of an ejection from Paradise; and his description seems to have furnished subjects of imitation to Milton.

“It has been imagined that the Indians entertained some notions, founded on traditionary accounts, of Paradise; and the representations of the serpent under the female form, and styled the Mexican Eve, are said to be found in the symbolical paintings of Mexico.

“The original perfection of man, the corruption of human nature resulting from the fall, and the increasing depravity which proceeded with augmented violence from generation to generation, are to be found in various parts of profane literature. Chrysalus, the Pythagorean, declared that man was made in the image of God. Cicero (as well as Ovid) speaks of man as created erect, as if God excited him to look up to his former relation and ancient abode. The loss of his resemblance to God was supposed to have resulted from disobedience, and was considered as so universal that it was generally admitted, as is expressed by Horace, that ‘no man was born without vices.’ The conviction of a gradual deterioration from age to age,—of a change from a golden period, by successive transitions, to an iron depravity,—of a lapse from a state devoid of guilt and fear, to times filled with iniquity, was universally entertained.

“Descriptions to this effect are to be found in the writings of almost all the poets; and they are confirmed by the reports of philosophers and historians. Providence seems to have drawn evidence of the guilt of men from their own confessions,

and to have preserved their testimonies for the conviction of subsequent times.”*

In the Gothic mythology, which seems to have been derived from the east, Thor is represented as the first-born of the supreme God, and is styled in the Edda, “the eldest of sons;” he was esteemed a middle divinity, a mediator between God and man. With respect to his actions, he is said to have wrestled with death, and, in the struggle, to have been brought upon one knee; to have bruised the head of the serpent with his mace; and, in his final engagement with that monster, to have beat him to the earth and slain him. This victory, however, is not obtained but at the expense of his own life: “Recoiling back nine steps, he falls dead upon the spot, suffocated with the floods of venom which the serpent vomits forth upon him.” Much the same notion, we are informed, is prevalent in the mythology of the Hindoos: “Two sculptured figures are yet extant in one of their oldest pagodas, the former of which represents Creeshna, an incarnation of their mediatorial god Veeshnu, trampling on the crushed head of the serpent; while in the latter it is seen encircling the deity in its folds, and biting his heel.” An engraving of this curious sculpture is given in Moore’s Hindu Pantheon.

As to those who would interpret the account, the literal meaning of which we have endeavoured to establish, partly literally, and partly allegorically, a satisfactory answer is given in the following observations of Bishop Horsley:—

“No writer of true history would mix plain matter of fact with allegory in one continued narrative, without any intimation of a transition from one to the other. If, therefore, any part of this narrative be matter of fact, no part is allegorical. On the other hand, if any part be allegorical, no part is naked matter of fact: And the consequence of this will be, that every thing in every part of the whole narrative must be allegorical. If the formation of the woman out of the man be allegory, the woman must be an allegorical woman. The man, therefore, must be an allegorical man; for of such a man only the alle-

* Gray’s Connexion.

gorical woman will be a meet companion. If the man is allegorical, his Paradise will be an allegorical garden ; the trees that grew in it, allegorical trees ; the rivers that watered it, allegorical rivers ; and thus we may ascend to the very beginning of the creation ; and conclude at last, that the heavens are allegorical heavens, and the earth an allegorical earth. Thus the whole history of the creation will be an allegory, of which the real subject is not disclosed ; and in this absurdity the scheme of allegorizing ends.”*

But though the literal sense of the history is thus established, yet that it has in several parts, but in perfect accordance with the literal interpretation, a mystical and higher sense than the letter, is equally to be proved from the Scriptures ; and, though some writers, who have maintained the literal interpretation inviolate, have run into unauthorized fancies in their interpretation of the mystical sense, that is no reason why we ought not to go to the full length to which the light of the Scriptures, an infallible comment upon themselves, will conduct us. It is, as we have seen, matter of established history, that our first parents were prohibited from the tree of knowledge, and, after their fall, were excluded from the tree of life ; that they were tempted by a serpent ; and that various maledictions were passed upon them, and upon the instrument of their seduction. But, rightly to understand this history, it is necessary to recollect, that man was in a state of trial ; that the prohibition of a certain fruit was but one part of the law under which he was placed ; that the serpent was but the instrument of the real tempter ; and that the curse pronounced on the instrument was symbolical of the punishment reserved for the agent.

The first of these particulars appears on the face of the history ; and to a state of trial the power of moral freedom was essential. This is a subject on which we shall have occasion to speak more at large in the sequel ; but, that the power of choosing good and evil was vested with our first parents, is as apparent from the account as that they were placed under rule and restraint. In vain were they commanded to obey, if obe-

* Horsley's Sermons.

dience was impossible ; in vain placed under prohibition, if they had no power to resist temptation. Both would, indeed, have been unworthy the divine Legislator ; and if this be allowed, then their moral freedom must also be conceded. They are contemplated throughout the whole transaction, not as instruments, but as actors ; and, as such, capable of reward and punishment. Commands are issued to them ; which supposes a power of obedience, either original and permanent in themselves, or derived, by the use of means, from God, and therefore attainable ; and, however the question may be darkened by metaphysical subtleties, the power to obey necessarily implied the power to refuse and rebel. The promised continuance of their happiness, which is to be viewed in the light of a reward, implies the one ; the actual infliction of punishment as certainly includes the other.

The power of obeying and the power of disobeying being then mutually involved, that which determines to the one or to the other is the will. For, if it were some power *ab extra*, operating necessarily, man would no longer be an actor, but be reduced to the mere condition of a patient, the mere instrument of another. This does not, however, shut out solicitation and strong influence from without, provided it be allowed to be resistible, either by man's own strength, or by strength from a higher source, to which he may have access, and by which he may fortify himself. But, as no absolute control can be externally exerted over man's actions, and he remain accountable ; and, on the other hand, as his actions are in fact controllable in a manner consistent with his free agency ; we must look for this power in his own mind : And the only faculty which he possesses, to which any such property can be attributed, is called, for that very reason, and because of that very quality, his " will " or " choice ; " a power by which, in that state of completeness and excellence in which Adam was created, he must be supposed to be able to command his thoughts, his desires, his words, and his conduct, however excited, with an absolute sovereignty.*

* *Impulsus etsi vehemens valdè atque potens esset, voluntatis tamen imperic atque arbitrio semper egressus ejus in actum subjiciebatur. Poterat enim*

This faculty of willing, indeed, appears essential to a rational being, in whatever rank he may be placed. "Every rational being," says Dr. Jenkins, very justly,* "must naturally have a liberty of choice, that is, it must have a will to choose as well as an understanding to reason; because a faculty of understanding, if left to itself without a will to determine it, must always think of the same objects, or proceed in a continued series and connexion of thoughts, without any end or design, which would be labour in vain, and tedious thoughtfulness to no purpose." But, though will be essential to rational existence, and freedom of will to a creature placed in a state of trial, yet the degree of external influence upon its determinations, through whatever means it may operate, may be very different both in kind and degree; which is only saying, in other words, that the circumstances of trial may be varied, and made more easy or more difficult and dangerous, at the pleasure of the great Governor and Lord of all. Some who have written on this subject seem to have carried their views of the circumstances of the paradisiacal probation too high; others have not placed them high enough. The first have represented our first parents to have been so exclusively intellectual and devotional, as to be almost out of the reach of temptation from sense and passion; others, as approximating too nearly to their mortal and corrupt descendants. This, however, is plain, from the Scriptures, the guide we ought scrupulously to follow, that they were subject to temptation, or solicitation of the will, from intellectual pride, from sense, and from passion. The two first operated on Eve, and, probably, also on Adam; to which was added, in him, a passionate subjection to the wishes of his wife.† If, then, these are the facts of their temptation, the circumstances of their

voluntas, divinæ voluntatis consideratione armata, resistere illi, eumque in ordinem istâ vi redigere: Alioquin enim frustranea fuisset legislatio, quâ affectus circumscriberetur, et refrænabatur.—EPISCOPII Disputatio ix.

* Reasonableness of Christian Religion.

† *Accessit in Adamo specialis quidam conjugis propriæ amor, quo adductus in gratiam illius, affectui suo proclivius indulsit, et tentationi Sathanæ facilius cessit auresque præbuit.*—EPISCOPII Disputatio ix.

trial are apparent. “The soul of man,” observes Stillingfleet,* “is seated in the middle, as it were, between those more excellent beings which live perpetually above, with which it partakes in the sublimity of its nature and understanding; and those inferior terrestrial beings, with which it communicates through the vital union which it has with the body; and that, by reason of its natural freedom, it is sometimes assimilated to the one, and sometimes to the other, of these extremes. We must observe, farther, that in this compound nature of ours, there are several powers and faculties, several passions and affections, differing in their nature and tendency, according as they result from the soul or body; that each of these has its proper object, in a due application to which it is easy and satisfied; that they are none of them sinful in themselves, but may be instruments of much good, when rightly applied, as well as occasion great mischief by a misapplication: Whereupon a considerable part of virtue will consist in regulating them, and in keeping our sensitive part subject to the rational. This is the original constitution of our nature; and, since the first man was endowed with the powers and faculties of the mind, and had the same dispositions and inclinations of body, it cannot be but that he must have been liable to the same sort of temptations, and, consequently, capable of complying with the dictates of sense and appetite, contrary to the direction of reason and the conviction of his own mind: And to this cause the Scripture seems to ascribe the commission of the first sin, when it tells us, that ‘the woman saw the tree, that it was good for food and pleasant to the eye, and desirable to make one wise;’ that is, it had several qualities that were adapted to her natural appetites; was beautiful to the sight, and delightful to the taste, and improving to the understanding, which both answered the desire of knowledge implanted in her spiritual, and the love of sensual pleasure resulting from her animal, part; and these, heightened by the suggestions of the tempter, abated the horror of God’s prohibition, and induced her to act contrary to his express command.”

* *Origines Sacrae.*

It is therefore manifest that the state of trial in which our first parents were placed was one which required, in order to the preservation of virtue, vigilance, prayer, resistance, and the active exercise of the dominion of the will over solicitation. No creature can be absolutely perfect, because it is finite ; and it would appear, from the example of our first parents, that an innocent and, in its kind, a perfect rational being, is kept from falling only by “ taking hold ” on God ; and, as this is an act, there must be a determination of the will to it ; and so when the least carelessness, the least tampering with the desire of forbidden gratifications, is induced, there is always an enemy at hand to make use of the opportunity to darken the judgment and to accelerate the progress of evil. Thus, when “ desire is conceived, it bringeth forth sin ; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” This is the only account we can obtain of the origin of evil, and it resolves itself into three principles : 1. The necessary finiteness, and, therefore, imperfection in degree, of created natures. 2. The liberty of choice, which is essential to rational, accountable beings. 3. The influence of temptation on the will. That Adam was so endowed as to have resisted the temptation, is a sufficient proof of the justice of his Maker throughout this transaction ; that his circumstances of trial were made precisely what they were, is to be resolved into a wisdom, the full manifestation of which is, probably, left to another state, and will, doubtless, there have its full declaration

The following acute observations of Bishop Butler may assist us to conceive how possible it is for a perfectly innocent being to fall under the power of evil, whenever a vigilant and resisting habit is not perfectly and absolutely persevered in : “ This seems distinctly conceivable, from the very nature of particular affections and propensions. For, suppose creatures intended for such a particular state of life, for which such propensions were necessary ; suppose them endowed with such propensions, together with moral understanding, as well including a practical sense of virtue, as a speculative perception of it ; and that all these several principles, both natural and moral, forming an inward constitution of mind, were in the most

exact proportion possible ; that is, in a proportion the most exactly adapted to their intended state of life : Such creatures would be made upright, or finitely perfect. Now particular propensions, from their very nature, must be felt, the objects of them being present ; though they cannot be gratified at all, or not with the allowance of the moral principle. But if they can be gratified without its allowance, or by contradicting it, then they must be conceived to have some tendency, in how low a degree soever, yet some tendency, to induce persons to such forbidden gratifications. This tendency, in some one particular propension, may be increased by the greater frequency of occasions naturally exciting it, than of occasions exciting others. The least voluntary indulgence in forbidden circumstances, though but in thought, will increase this wrong tendency ; and may increase it further, till, peculiar conjunctions perhaps conspiring, it becomes effect ; and danger from deviating from right, ends in actual deviation from it ;—a danger necessarily arising from the very nature of propension ; and which, therefore, could not have been prevented, though it might have been escaped, or got innocently through. The case would be, as if we were to suppose a straight path marked out for a person, in which such a degree of attention would keep him steady ; but if he would not attend in this degree, any one of a thousand objects catching his eye might lead him out of it. Now it is impossible to say, how much even the first full overt act of irregularity might disorder the constitution, unsettle the adjustments, and alter the proportions, which formed it, and in which the uprightness of its make consisted ; but repetition of irregularities would produce habits, and thus the constitution would be spoiled, and creatures, made upright, become corrupt, and depraved in their settled character, proportionably to their repeated irregularities in occasional acts.” *

These observations are general, and are introduced only to illustrate the point, that we may conceive of a creature being made innocent, and yet still dependent upon the exercise of

caution for its preservation from moral corruption and offence. It was not, in fact, by the slow and almost imperceptible formation of evil habits, described in the extract just given, by which Adam fell; that is but one way in which we may conceive it possible for sin to enter a holy soul. He was exposed to the wiles of a tempter, and his fall was sudden. But this exposure to a particular danger was only a circumstance in his condition of probation. It was a varied mode of subjecting the will to solicitation; but no necessity of yielding was laid upon man in consequence of this circumstance. From the history we learn, that the devil used not force, but persuasion, which involves no necessity; and that the devil cannot force men to sin, is sufficiently plain from this, that, such is his malevolence, if he could render sin inevitable, he would not resort to persuasion and the sophistry of error to accomplish an end more directly within his reach.*

The prohibition under which our first parents were placed has been the subject of many “a fool-born jest;” and the threatened punishment has been argued to be disproportioned to the offence. Such objections are easily dissipated. We have already seen, that all rational creatures are under a law which requires supreme love to God, and entire obedience to his commands; and that, consequently, our first parents were placed under this equitable obligation. We have also seen, that all specific laws emanate from this general law; that they are manifestations of it, and always suppose it. The Decalogue was such a manifestation of it to the Jews; and the prohibition of the tree of knowledge is to be considered in the same light. Certainly this restraint pre-supposed a right in God to command, a duty in the creatures to obey; and the particular precept was but the exercise of that previous right which was vested in him, and the enforcement of that previous obligation upon them. To suppose it to be the only rule under which our first parents were placed would be absurd; for then it would follow, that if they had become sensual in

* *Diabolus causa talis status non potest; quia ille suasionem solam usus legitur: Suasio autem necessitatem nullam affert, sed moraliter tantum voluntatem ad se allicere atque attrahere conatur.*—EPISCOPIUS.

the use of any other food than that of the prohibited tree, or if they had refused worship and honour to God their Creator, or if they had become "hateful and hating one another," these would not have been sins. This precept was, however, made prominent by special injunction; and it is enough to say, that it was, as the event showed, a sufficient test of their obedience.

The objection that it was a positive, and not a moral, precept, deserves to be for a moment considered. The difference between the two is, that "moral precepts are those, the reasons of which we see; positive precepts those, the reasons of which we do not see. Moral duties arise out of the nature of the case itself, prior to external command: Positive duties do not arise out of the nature of the case, but from external command; nor would they be duties at all, were it not for such command received from Him whose creatures and subjects we are."* It has, however, been justly observed, that, since positive precepts have somewhat of a moral nature, we may see the reasons of them considered in this view; and, so far as we discern the reasons of both, moral and positive precepts are alike. In the case in question no just objection, certainly, can be made against the making a positive precept the special test of the obedience of our first parents. In point of obligation, positive precepts rest upon the same ground as moral ones, namely, the will of God. Granting, even, that we see no reason for them, this does not alter the case: We are bound to obey our Creator, both as matter of right and matter of gratitude; and the very essence of sin consists in resisting the will of God. Even the reason of moral precepts, their fitness, suitableness, and influence upon society, do not constitute them absolutely obligatory upon us. The obligation rests upon their being made law by the authority of God. Their fitness, &c., may be the reasons why he has made them parts of his law; but it is the promulgation of his will which makes the law, and brings us under obligation. In this respect, then, moral and positive laws are of equal authority when enjoined

* Butler's Analogy.

with equal explicitness. To see or not to see the reasons of the divine enactments, whether moral or positive, is a circumstance which affects not the question of duty. There is, nevertheless, a distinction to be made between positive precepts and arbitrary ones, which have no reason but the will of Him who enacts them, though, were such enjoined by Almighty God, our obligation to obey would be absolute. It is, however, proper to suppose, that, when the reasons of positive precepts are not seen by us, they do, in reality, exist in those relations, and qualities, and habitudes of things which are only known to God ; for, that he has a sufficient reason for all that he requires of us, is a conclusion as rational as it is pious ; and to slight positive precepts, therefore, is, in fact, to refuse obedience to the Lawgiver, only on the proud and presumptuous ground, that he has not made us acquainted with his own reasons for enacting them. Nor is the institution of such precepts without an obvious general moral reason, though the reason for the injunction of particular positive injunctions should not be explained. Humility, which is the root of all virtue, may, in some circumstances, be more effectually promoted when we are required to obey under the authority of God, than when we are prompted also by the conviction of the fitness and excellence of his commands. It is true, that, when the observance of a moral command, and that of a positive precept, come into such opposition to one another that both cannot be observed, we have examples in Scripture which authorize us to prefer the former to the latter,—as when our Lord healed on the Sabbath-day, and justified his disciples for plucking the ears of corn when they were hungry ; yet, in point of fact, the rigidity which forbade the doing good on the Sabbath-day, in these cases of necessity, we have our Lord's authority to say, was the result of a misinterpretation of the moral precept itself, and no direct infringement of it was implied in either case. Should an actual impossibility occur of observing two precepts, one a moral and the other a positive one, it can be but a rare case ; and our conduct must certainly be regulated, not on our own views merely, but on such general principles as our now perfect revelation furnishes us with, and it is at our risk that we mis-

apply them. In the case of our first parents, the positive command neither did, nor, apparently in their circumstances, could, stand in opposition to any moral injunction contained in that universal law under which they were placed. It harmonized perfectly with its two great principles, love to God and love to our neighbour, for both would be violated by disobedience; one, by rebellion against the Creator; the other, by disregard of each other's welfare, and that of their posterity.

Nor, indeed, was this positive injunction without some obvious moral reason, the case with, probably, all positive precepts of divine authority, when carefully considered. The ordinances of public worship, baptism in the name of Christ, the celebration of the Lord's supper, and the observance of the Sabbath, have numerous and very plain reasons both of subjection, recognition, and gratitude; and so had the prohibition of the fruit of one of the trees of the garden. The moral precepts of the Decalogue would, for the most part, have been inappropriate to the peculiar condition of the first pair;—such as, the prohibitions of Polytheism, of the use of idolatrous images, of taking the name of God in vain, of theft and adultery, of murder and covetousness. Thus even if objectors were left at liberty to attempt to point out a better test of obedience than that which was actually appointed, they would find, as in most such cases, how much easier it is to object than to suggest. The law was, in the first place, simple and explicit; it was not difficult of observation, and it accorded with the circumstances of those on whom it was enjoined. They were placed amidst abundance of pleasant and exhilarating fruits; and of those, one kind only was reserved. This reservation implied also great principles. It may be turned into ridicule: So, by an ignorant person, might the reserve in our customs of a pepper-corn, or other quit-rent, which yet are acknowledgments of subjection and sovereignty. This is given as an illustration, not, indeed, as a parallel; for there is a very natural view of this transaction in Paradise, which gives to it an aspect so noble and dignified that we may well shudder at the impiety of that poor wit by which it has been sometimes

ignorantly assailed. The dominion of this lower world had been given to man ; but it is equally required by the divine glory, and by the benefit of creatures themselves, that all should acknowledge their subjection to Him. Man was required to do this, as it were, openly, and in the presence of the whole creation, by a public token, and to give proof of it by a continued abstinence from the prohibited fruit. He was required to do it also in a way suitable to his excellent nature, and to his character as lord of all other creatures, by a free and voluntary obedience ; thus acknowledging the common Creator to be his supreme Lord, and himself to be dependent upon his bounty and favour. In this view we can conceive nothing more fitting, as a test of obedience, and nothing more important, than the moral lesson continually taught by the obligation thus openly and publicly to acknowledge the rights and authority of Him who was, naturally, the Lord of all.*

The immediate visible agent in the seduction of man to sin was the serpent ; but the whole testimony of Scripture is in proof, that the real tempter was that subtle and powerful evil spirit, whose general appellatives are “the devil” and “Satan.”† This shows that ridicule, as to the serpent, is quite misplaced ; and that one of the most serious doctrines is involved in the whole account,—the doctrine of diabolical influence. We have already observed, that we have no means of ascertaining the pristine form and qualities of this animal, except that it was distinguished from all the beasts of the field, which the Lord God had made, by his “subtlety,” or intelligence, for the word does not necessarily imply a bad sense ; and we might, indeed, be content to give credit to Satan for a wily choice of the most fitting instrument for his purpose.

* *Legem tamen hanc idcirco homini latam fuisse arbitramur, ut ei obsequendo et obtemperando, palam publicèque veluti testaretur, se, cui dominium rerum omnium creatarum a Deo delatum erat, Deo tamen ipsi subjectum obnoxiumque esse ; utque obsequio eodem suo tanquam vasallus et cliens, publico aliquo recognitionis symbolo, profiteretur, se in omnibus Deo suo, tanquam supremo Domino. obtemperare et parere velle ; id quod æquissimum erat.*—ERISCIPIUS.

† The former word signifies “a traducer” and “false accuser ;” the latter, “an adversary.”

These are questions which, however, sink into nothing before the important doctrine of the liability of man, both in his primitive and in his fallen state, to temptations marshalled and directed by a superior malignant intelligence. Of this, the fact cannot be doubted, if we allow the Scriptures to be interpreted by any rules which will admit them to be written for explicit instruction and the use of popular readers; and, although we have but general intimations of the existence of an order of apostate spirits, and know nothing of the date of their creation, or the circumstances of their probation and fall, yet, this is clear, that they are permitted, for their "time," to have influence on earth, to war against the virtue and the peace of man, though under constant control and government; and that this entered into the circumstances of the trial of our first parents, and that it enters into ours. In this part of the history of the fall, therefore, without giving up any portion of the literal sense, we must, on the authority of other passages of Scripture, look beyond the letter, and regard the serpent but as the instrument of a super-human tempter, who then commenced his first act of warfare against the rule of God in this lower world; and began a contest, which, for purposes of wisdom, to be hereafter more fully disclosed, he has been allowed to carry on for ages, and will still be permitted to maintain, till the result shall make his fall more marked, and bring into view moral truths and principles in which the whole universe of innocent or redeemed creatures are, probably, to be instructed to their eternal advantage.

In like manner, the malediction pronounced upon the serpent, whilst it is to be understood literally as to that animal, must be considered as teaching more than the letter simply expresses; and the terms of it are, therefore, for the reason given above, (the comment found in other parts of Scripture,) to be regarded as symbolical. "As the literal sense does not exclude the mystical, the cursing of the serpent is a symbol to us, and a visible pledge of the malediction with which the devil is struck by God, and whereby he is become the most abominable and miserable of all creatures. But man, by the help of 'the Seed of the woman,' that is, by our Saviour, shall

bruise his head, wound him in the place that is most mortal, and destroy him with eternal ruin. In the meantime, the enmity and abhorrence we have of the serpent is a continual warning to us of the danger we are in of the devil, and how heartily we ought to abhor him and all his works.* To this view, indeed, strenuous objections have been made; and in order to get quit of the doctrine of so early and significant a promise of a Redeemer,—a promise so expressed as necessarily to imply redemption through the temporary suffering of the Redeemer, the bruising of his heel,—many of those who are willing to give up the letter entirely, in other parts of the narrative, and to resolve the whole into fable, resist this addition of the parabolical meaning to the literal, and contend for that alone. In answer to this, we may observe,—

1. That, on the merely literal interpretation of these words, the main instrument of the transgression would remain unsentenced and unpunished. That instrument was the devil, as already shown, and who, in evident allusion to this circumstance, is called, in Scripture, “a murderer from the beginning,” “a liar, and the father of lies;” “that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world;” he “who sinneth from the beginning;” so that whosoever “committeth sin is of the devil,” and consequently our first parents. It is also in plain allusion to this history, and to the bruising of the head of the serpent, that the Apostle takes the phrase of “bruising” Satan under the feet of believers. These passages can only be disposed of by resolving the whole account of diabolical agency in Scripture into figures of speech; (the theory adopted by Socinians, and which will be subsequently refuted;) but if the agency of Satan be allowed in this transaction, then, to confine ourselves to the merely literal sense leaves the prime mover of the offence without any share of the malediction; and the curse of the serpent must, therefore, in justice, be concluded to fall with the least weight upon the animal instrument, the serpent itself, and with its highest emphasis upon the intelligent and accountable seducer.

2. We are compelled to this interpretation by the reason of the case. That a higher power was identified with the serpent in the transaction is apparent from the intelligent and rational powers ascribed to the serpent, which it is utterly inconsistent with the distinction between man and the inferior animals to attribute to a mere brute. He was the most "subtle" of the beasts, and made such near approaches to rationality, as to be a fit instrument by which to deceive ; but, assuredly, the use of speech, of reasoning powers, a knowledge of the divine law, and the power of seductive artifice to entrap human beings in their state of perfection into sin against God, are not the faculties of an irrational animal. The solemn manner, too, in which the Almighty addresses the serpent in pronouncing the curse, shows that an intelligent and free agent was arraigned before him ; and it would, indeed, be ridiculous to suppose to the contrary.

3. The circumstances of our first parents also confirm the symbolical interpretation, in conjunction with the literal one. This is shown by Bishop Sherlock with much acuteness :—

"They were now in a state of sin, standing before God to receive sentence for their disobedience, and had reason to expect a full execution of the penalty threatened, 'In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' But God came in mercy as well as judgment, purposing not only to punish, but to restore, man. The judgment is awful and severe ; the woman is doomed to sorrow in conception ; the man to sorrow and travail all the days of his life ; the ground is cursed for his sake ; and the end of the judgment is, 'Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.' Had they been left thus, they might have continued in their labour and sorrow for their appointed time, and at last have returned to dust, without any well-grounded hope or confidence in God : They must have looked upon themselves as rejected by their Maker, delivered up to trouble and sorrow in this world, and as having no hope in any other. Upon this ground, I conceive, there could have been no religion left in the world ; for a sense of religion without hope is a state of frenzy and distraction, void of all inducements to love and obedience, or any thing else that is praise-

worthy. If, therefore, God intended to preserve them as objects of mercy, it was absolutely necessary to communicate so much hope to them, as might be a rational foundation for their future endeavours to be reconciled to him. This seems to be the primary intention of this first divine prophecy; and it was necessary to the state of the world, and the condition of religion, which could not possibly have been supported without the communication of such hopes. The prophecy is excellently adapted to this purpose, and manifestly conveyed such hopes to our first parents. For let us consider in what sense we may suppose them to understand the prophecy. Now, they must necessarily understand the prophecy, either according to the literal meaning of the words, or according to such meaning as the whole circumstance of the transaction, of which they are part, does require. If we suppose them to understand the words literally only, and that God meant them to be so understood, this passage must appear ridiculous. Do but imagine that you see God coming to judge the offenders; Adam and Eve before him in the utmost distress; that you hear God inflicting pains, and sorrows, and misery, and death, upon the first of human race; and that, in the midst of all this scene of woe and great calamity, you hear him foretelling, with great solemnity, a very trivial accident that should sometimes happen in the world,—that serpents would be apt to bite men by the heels, and that men would be apt to revenge themselves by striking them on the head! What has this trifle to do with the loss of mankind, with the corruption of the natural and moral world, and the ruin of all the glory and happiness of the creation? Great comfort it was to Adam, doubtless, after telling him that his days would be short and full of misery, and his end without hope, to let him know, that he should now and then knock a snake on the head; but not even that without paying dear for his poor victory, for the snake should often bite him by the heel. Adam surely could not understand the prophecy in this sense, though some of his sons have so understood it. Leaving this, therefore, as absolutely absurd and ridiculous, let us consider what meaning the circumstances of the transaction do necessarily fix to the words of this pro-

phcey. Adam tempted by his wife, and she by the serpent, had fallen from their obedience, and were now in the presence of God, expecting judgment. They knew full well at this juncture, that their fall was the victory of the serpent, whom by experience they found to be an enemy to God and man ; to man, whom he had ruined by seducing him to sin ; to God, the noblest work of whose creation he had defaced. It could not, therefore, but be some comfort to them to hear the serpent first condemned, and to see that, however he had prevailed against them, he had gained no victory over their Maker, who was able to assert his own honour, and to punish this great author of iniquity. By this method of God's proceeding, they were secured from thinking that there was any evil being equal to the Creator in power and dominion ; an opinion which gained ground in after-times through the prevalency of evil, and is, where it does prevail, destructive of all true religion. The belief of God's supreme dominion, which is the foundation of all religion, being thus preserved, it was still necessary to give them such hopes as they could not but conceive, (when they heard from the mouth of God that the serpent's victory was not a complete victory over even themselves,) that they and their posterity should be enabled to contest his empire ; and, though they were to suffer much in the struggle, yet finally they should prevail, and bruise the serpent's head, and be delivered from his power and dominion over them. What now could they conceive this conquest over the serpent to mean ? Is it not natural to expect, that we shall recover that by victory which we lost by being defeated ? They knew that the enemy had subdued them by sin ; could they then conceive hopes of victory otherwise than by righteousness ? They lost through sin the happiness of their creation ; could they expect less from the return of righteousness than the recovery of the blessings forfeited ? What else but this could they expect ? For the certain knowledge they had of their loss when the serpent prevailed, could not but lead them to a clear knowledge of what they should regain by prevailing against the serpent. The language of this prophecy is indeed in part metaphorical ; but it is a great mistake to think that all metaphors are of

uncertain signification ; for the design and scope of the speaker, with the circumstances attending, create a final and determinate sense."

The import of this prediction appears, from various allusions of Scripture, to have been, that the Messiah, who was, in an eminent and peculiar sense, "the seed of the woman," should, though himself bruised in the conflict, obtain a complete victory over the malice and power of Satan, and so restore those benefits to man which by sin he had lost. From this time hope looked forward to the great Restorer; and sacrifices, which are no otherwise to be accounted for, began to be offered in prefiguration of the fact and efficacy of his sufferings. From that first promise, that light of salvation broke forth which, by the increased illumination of revelation through following ages, shone brighter and brighter to the perfect day. To what extent our first parents understood this promise, it is not possible for us to say. Sufficiently, there is no doubt, for hope and faith; and that it might be the ground of a new dispensation of religion, in which salvation was to be of grace, not of works, and in which prayer was to be offered for all necessary blessings, on the ground of pure mercy, and through the intercession of an infinitely worthy Mediator. The Scriptures cannot be explained, unless this be admitted, for these are the very principles which are assumed in God's government of man from the period of his fall; and it is, therefore, probable, that, in those earliest patriarchal ages, of which we have so brief and rapid an account in the writings of Moses, and which we may, nevertheless, collect, were ages distinguished by the frequent and visible intercourse of God and superior beings with men, there were revelations made and instructions given which are not specifically recorded, but which formed that body of theology which is, unquestionably, pre-supposed by the whole Mosaic institute. But if we allow that this first promise, as interpreted by us, contains more than our first parents can be supposed to have discovered in it, we may say, with the Prelate just quoted, "Since this prophecy has been plainly fulfilled in Christ, and by the event appropriated to him only, I would fain know how it comes to be conceived to be so ridiculous a

thing in us to suppose that God, to whom the whole event was known from the beginning, should make choice of such expressions as naturally conveyed so much knowledge to our first parents as he intended, and yet should appear, in the fulness of time, to have been peculiarly adapted to the event, which he, from the beginning, saw, and which he intended the world should one day see, and which, when they should see, they might the more easily acknowledge to be the work of his hand, by the secret evidence which he had enclosed from the days of old in the words of prophecy."

From these remarks on the history of the fall, we are called to consider the state into which that event reduced the first man and his posterity.

As to Adam, it is clear, that he became liable to inevitable death, and that, during his temporary life, he was doomed to severe labour, expressed in Scripture by eating his bread in, or "by, the sweat of his brow." These are incontrovertible points; but that the threatening of death, as the penalty of disobedience, included spiritual and eternal death, as to himself and his posterity, has been, and continues to be, largely and resolutely debated, and will require our consideration.

On this subject the following are the leading opinions:—

The view stated by Pelagius, who lived in the fifth century, is, if he has not been misrepresented, that which is held by the modern Socinians. It is, that though Adam, by his transgression, exposed himself to the displeasure of his Maker, yet that neither were the powers of his own nature at all impaired, nor have his posterity, in any sense, sustained the smallest hurt by his disobedience; that he was created mortal, and would therefore have died, had he not sinned; and that the only evil he suffered was, his being expelled from Paradise, and subjected to the discipline of labour; that his posterity, like himself, are placed in a state of trial; that death to them, as to him, is a natural event; and that the prospect of certain dissolution, joined to the common calamities of life, is favourable to the cultivation of virtue. By a proper attention, we may maintain our innocence amidst surrounding temptations; and may also

daily improve in moral excellence, by the proper use of reason and other natural powers.

A second opinion has been attributed to the followers of Arminius, on which a remark shall just now be offered. It has been thus epitomized by Dr. Hill:—

“According to this opinion, although the first man had a body naturally frail and mortal, his life would have been for ever preserved by the bounty of his Creator, had he continued obedient; and the instrument employed by God, to preserve his mortal body from decay, was the fruit of life. Death was declared to be the penalty of transgression; and therefore, as soon as he transgressed, he was removed at a distance from the tree of life; and his posterity, inheriting his natural mortality, and not having access to the tree of life, are subjected to death. It is therefore said by St. Paul, ‘By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men. In Adam all die. By one man’s offence death reigned by one.’ These expressions clearly point out death to be the consequence of Adam’s transgression, an evil brought upon his posterity by his fault; and this the Arminians understand to be the whole meaning of its being said, ‘Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image;’ (Gen. v. 3;) and of Paul saying, ‘We have borne the image of the earthy.’

“It is admitted, however, by those who hold the opinion, that this change upon the condition of mankind, from a life preserved without end, to mortality, was most unfavourable to their moral character. The fear of death enfeebles and enslaves the mind; the pursuit of those things which are necessary to support a frail perishing life engrosses and contracts the soul; and the desires of sensual pleasure are rendered more eager and ungovernable, by the knowledge that the time of enjoying them soon passes away. Hence arise envying of those who have a larger share of the good things of this life; strife with those who interfere in our enjoyments; impatience under restraint; and sorrow and repining when pleasure is abridged. And to this variety of turbulent passions, the natural fruits of the punishment of Adam’s transgression, there are also to be added, all the fretfulness and disquietude occa-

sioned by the diseases and pains which are inseparable from the condition of a mortal being. In this way the Arminians explain such expressions as these: ‘By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners:’ ‘All are under sin:’ ‘Behold, I was shapen in iniquity;’ that is, all men, in consequence of Adam’s sin, are born in these circumstances,—under that disposition of events which subjects them to the dominion of passion, and exposes them to so many temptations, that it is impossible for any man to maintain his integrity. And hence, they say, arises the necessity of a Saviour, who, restoring to man the immortality which he had forfeited, may be said to have abolished death; who effectually delivers his followers from that bondage of mind, and that corruption of character, which are connected with the fear of death; who, by his perfect obedience, obtains pardon for those sins into which they have been betrayed by their condition; and by his Spirit enables them to overcome the temptations which human nature of itself cannot withstand.

“According to this opinion, then, the human race has suffered universally in a very high degree by the sin of their first parent. At the same time, the manner of their suffering is analogous to many circumstances in the ordinary dispensations of Providence; for we often see children, by the negligence or fault of their parents, placed in situations very unfavourable both to their prosperity and to their improvement; and we can trace the profligacy of their character to the defects of their education, to the example set before them in their youth, and to the multiplied temptations in which, from a want of due attention on the part of others, they find themselves early entangled.”*

That this is a very defective view of the effects of the original offence upon Adam and his descendants, must be acknowledged. Whether Adam, as to his body, became mortal by positive infliction, or by being excluded from the means of warding off disease and mortality, which were provided in the tree of life, is a speculative point, which has no

* Lectures.

important theological bearing ; but that the corruption of our nature, and not merely its greater liability to be corrupted, is the doctrine of Scripture, will presently be shown. However, this was not the opinion of Arminius, nor of his immediate followers. Nor is it the opinion of that large body of Christians, often called “Arminians,” who follow the theological opinions of Mr. Wesley. It was the opinion of Dr. Whitby and several Divines of the English Church, who, though called Arminians, were Semi-Pelagians, or at least made great approaches to their error ; and the writer just quoted has no authority for giving this as the Arminian opinion, except the work of Whitby’s entitled, *Tractatus de Imputatione Peccati Adami*. In this, however, he has followed others, who, on Whitby’s authority, attribute this notion not only to Arminius singly, but to the body of the Remonstrants, and to all those who, to this day, advocate the doctrine of general redemption. This is one proof how little pains many Divines of the Calvinistic school have taken to understand the opinions they have hastily condemned in mass.

The following passages from the writings of Arminius will do justice to the character of that eminent Divine on this important subject.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth propositions of his seventh Public Lecture on the first Sin of the first Man, he says,—

“The immediate and proper effect of this sin was, that God was offended by it. For since the form of sin is the transgression of the law, (1 John iii. 4,) such transgression primarily and immediately impinges against the Legislator himself ; (Gen. iii. 2 ;) and it impinges against him (Gen. iii. 16, 19, 23, 24) with offence, it having been his will that his law should not be infringed : (Gen. iii. 17 :) From which he conceives a just wrath, which is the second effect of sin. But this wrath is followed by the infliction of punishment, which here is twofold : 1. A liability to both deaths. (Rom. vi. 23.) 2. A privation of that primeval holiness and righteousness, (Luke xix. 26,) which, because they were the effects of the Holy Spirit, dwelling in man, ought not to remain in man who had fallen from the favour of God, and had incurred his anger.

For that Spirit is a seal and token of the divine favour and benevolence. (Rom. viii. 14, 15 ; 1 Cor. ii. 12.)

“ But the whole of this sin is not peculiar to our first parents, but is common to the whole race, and to all their posterity, who, at the time when the first sin was committed, were in their loins, and who afterwards descended from them in the natural mode of propagation, according to the primitive benediction. For, ‘in Adam, all have sinned.’ (Rom. v. 12.) Whatever punishment, therefore, was inflicted on our first parents, has also pervaded all their posterity, and still oppresses them ; so that all are ‘by nature children of wrath,’ (Eph. ii. 3,) obnoxious to condemnation and to death temporal and eternal, (Rom. v. 12,) and are, lastly, devoid of that [primeval] righteousness and holiness ; with which evils they would continue oppressed for ever, unless they were delivered from them by Jesus Christ ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. (Rom. v. 18, 19.)”*

In the epistle which Arminius addressed to Hippolytus de Collibus, describing grace and free-will, his views on this subject are still more clearly expressed :—

“ It is impossible for free-will without grace to begin or perfect any true or spiritual good. I say, the grace of Christ which pertains to regeneration is simply and absolutely necessary for the illumination of the mind, the ordering of the affections, and the inclination of the will to that which is good. It is that which operates on the mind, the affections, and the will ; which infuses good thoughts into the mind, inspires good desires into the affections, and leads the will to execute good thoughts and good desires. It prevents, (goes before,) accompanies, and follows. It excites, assists, works in us to will, and works with us, that we may not will in vain. It averts temptations, stands by and aids us in temptations, supports us against the flesh, the world, and Satan ; and, in the conflict, it grants us to enjoy the victory. It raises up again those who are conquered and fallen, it establishes them, and endues them with new strength, and renders them more cautious. It begins,

* Nichols’s Translation of the Works of Arminius, vol. ii., p. 156.

promotes, perfects, and consummates salvation. I confess, that the mind of the natural (*animalis*) and carnal man is darkened, his affections are depraved and disordered, his will is refractory, and that the man is dead in sins."*

And in his eleventh Public Disputation on the Free-will of Man, and its powers, he says, "The will of man, with respect to true good, is not only wounded, bruised, inferior, crooked, and attenuated; but it is likewise captivated, destroyed, and lost; and has no powers whatever, except such as are excited by grace."†

The doctrine of the Remonstrants is, "that God, to the glory of his abundant goodness, having decreed to make man after his own image, and to give him an easy and most equal law, and add thereunto a threatening of death to the transgressors thereof, and foreseeing that Adam would wilfully transgress the same, and thereby make himself and his posterity liable to condemnation; though God was, notwithstanding, mercifully affected towards man, yet, out of respect to his justice and truth, he would not give way to his mercy to save man till his justice should be satisfied, and his serious hatred of sin, and love of righteousness, should be made known." The condemnation here spoken of, as affecting Adam and his posterity, is to be understood of more than the death of the body, as being opposed to the salvation procured by the sacrifice of Christ; and, with respect to the moral state of human nature, since the fall, the third of their articles, exhibited at the Synod of Dort, states, that the Remonstrants "hold that a man hath not saving faith of himself, nor from the power of his own free-will, seeing that, whilst he is in the state of sin, he cannot of himself, nor by himself, think, will, or do any saving good."‡

The doctrine of the Church of England, though often claimed as exclusively Calvinistic on this point, accords perfectly with true Arminianism: "Original sin standeth not in

* Nichols's Translation of the Works of Arminius, vol. ii., p. 700.

† Ibid., p. 192.

‡ See Tenets of the Remonstrants, in Nichols's Calvinism and Arminianism Compared.

the following or imitation of Adam, as the Pelagians do vainly talk; but it is the fault or corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature only inclined to evil," &c. Some of the Divines of this Church have, on the other hand, endeavoured to soften this article, by availing themselves of the phrase "very far gone," as though it did not express a total defection from original righteousness. The articles were, however, subscribed by the two Houses of Convocation, in 1571, in Latin and English also, and therefore both copies are equally authentic. The Latin copy expresses this phrase by *quam longissimè distet*; which is as strong an expression as that language can furnish, fixes the sense of the compilers on this point, and takes away the argument which rests on the alleged equivocalness of the English version. Nor does there appear any material discrepancy between this statement of the fallen condition of man and the Augsburg Confession, the doctrine of the French Churches, that of the Calvinistic Church of Scotland, and, so far as the moral state of man only is concerned, the views of Calvin himself. There are, it is true, such expressions as "contagion," "infection," and the like, in some of these formularies, which are somewhat equivocal, as bearing upon a point from which some Divines, both Arminians and Calvinists, have dissented,—the direct corruption of human nature by a sort of judicial act; but, this point excepted, to which we shall subsequently turn our attention, the true Arminian, as fully as the Calvinist, admits the doctrine of the total depravity of human nature in consequence of the fall of our first parents; and is, indeed, enabled to carry it through his system with greater consistency than the Calvinist himself. For, whilst the latter is obliged, in order to account for certain good dispositions and occasional religious inclinations in those who never give any evidence of their actual conversion to God, to refer them to nature, and not to grace, which, according to them, is not given to the reprobate, the believer in general redemption maintains the total incapacity of unassisted nature to produce such effects, and attributes

them to that divine gracious influence which, if not resisted, would lead on to conversion. Some of the doctrines joined by Calvinists with the corruption of our common nature, are, indeed, very disputable, and such as we shall, in the proper place, attempt to prove unscriptural; but in this Arminians and they so well agree, that it is an entire delusion to represent this doctrine, as it is often done, as exclusively Calvinistic. "The Calvinists," says Bishop Tomline, "contend that the sin of Adam introduced into his nature such a radical impotence and depravity, that it is impossible for his descendants to make any voluntary effort [of themselves] towards piety and virtue, or in any respect to correct and improve their moral and religious character; and that faith and all the Christian graces are communicated by the sole and irresistible operation of the Spirit of God, without any endeavour or concurrence on the part of man."* The latter part only of this statement gives the Calvinistic peculiarity; the former is not exclusively theirs. We have seen the sentiment of Arminius on the natural state of man; and it perfectly harmonizes with that of Calvin where he says, in his own forcible manner, "Man is so totally overwhelmed, as with a deluge, that no part is free from sin; and therefore whatever proceeds from him is accounted sin."†

But, in bringing all these opinions to the test of scriptural testimony, we must first inquire into the import of the penalty of death, threatened upon the offences of the first man.

The Pelagian and Socinian notion, that Adam would have died had he not sinned, requires no other refutation than the words of the Apostle Paul, who declares expressly that death entered the world "by sin;" and so it inevitably follows, that, as to man at least, had there been no sin, there would have been no death.

The notion of others, that the death threatened extended to the annihilation of the soul as well as the body, and was only arrested by the interposition of a Redeemer, assumes a doctrine

* Refutation of Calvinism.

† Institutes.

which has no countenance at all in Scripture, namely, that the penalty of transgressing the divine law, when it extends to the soul, is death in the sense of annihilation. On the contrary, whenever the threat of death, in Scripture, refers to the soul, it unquestionably means future and conscious punishment. Besides, the term "death," which conveys the threatening, does not properly express annihilation. There is no adequate opposition between life and annihilation. If there were such an opposition between them, then life and non-annihilation must be equivalent terms. But they are not; for many things exist which do not live; and thus both the sense attached to the term "death," in Scripture, when applied to the soul, as well as the proper sense of that term itself, and the reason of the thing, forbid that interpretation.

The death threatened to Adam, we conclude, therefore, to have extended to the soul of man as well as to his body, though not in the sense of annihilation: But, for the confirmation of this, it is necessary to refer more particularly to the language of Scripture, which is its own best interpreter; and it will be seen, that the opinion of those Divines who include in the penalty attached to the first offence, the very "fulness of death," as it has been justly termed,—death bodily, spiritual, and eternal, is not to be puffed away by sarcasm, but stands firm on inspired testimony.

Besides death, as it is opposed to animal life, and which consists in the separation of the rational soul from the body, the Scriptures speak of the life and death of the soul in a moral sense. The first consists in the union of the soul with God, and is manifested by those vigorous, grateful, and holy affections which are, by this union, produced. The second consists in a separation of the soul from communion with God, and is manifested by the dominion of earthly and corrupt dispositions and habits, and an entire indifference or aversion to spiritual and heavenly things. This, too, is represented as the state of all who are not quickened by the instrumentality of the Gospel employed for this purpose by the power and agency of its divine Author: "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." The state of a rege-

nerate mind is, in accordance with this view, represented as a resurrection, and a "passing from death unto life;" and both to Christ and to the Holy Spirit is this work of quickening the souls of men, and preserving them in moral or spiritual life, attributed. To interpret, then, the death pronounced upon Adam, as including moral death, seeing that he, by his transgression, fell actually into the same moral state as a sinner against God, in which all those persons now are who are dead in trespasses and sins, is in entire accordance with the language of Scripture. For, if a state of sin in them is a state of spiritual death, then a state of sin in him was a state of spiritual death; and that both by natural consequence, the same cause producing the same effect, and also by the appointment of God, who departs from sinful men, and, withdrawing himself from all communion with the guilty, withdraws thereby the only source of moral or spiritual life.

But the highest sense of the term "death," in Scripture, is, the punishment of the soul in a future state, both by a loss of happiness, and by a separation from God, and also by a positive infliction of divine wrath. Now, this is stated, not as peculiar to any dispensation of religion, but as common to all; as the penalty of the transgression of the law of God in every degree. "Sin is the transgression of the law,"—this is its definition: "The wages of sin is death,"—this is its penalty. Here we have no mention made of any particular sin, as rendering the transgressor liable to this penalty, nor of any particular circumstance under which sin may be committed, as calling forth that fatal expression of the divine displeasure; but of sin itself generally;—of transgression of the divine law, in every form and degree, it is affirmed, "the wages of sin is death." This is, therefore, to be considered as an axiom in the jurisprudence of heaven. "Sin," says St. James, in a manner alike absolute and unqualified, "when it is finished, bringeth forth death;" nor have we the least intimation given in Scripture, that any sin whatever is exempted from this penalty; that some sins are punished in this life only, and others in the life to come. The degree of punishment will be varied by the offence; but death is the penalty attached to all sin, unless it is averted by

pardon, which itself supposes that in law the penalty has been incurred. What was there, then, in the case of Adam to take him out of this rule? His act was a transgression of the law, and therefore sin; as sin, its wages was death, which, in Scripture, we have seen, means, in its highest sense, “future punishment.”

To this, Dr. Taylor, whom most modern writers that deny the doctrine of original sin have followed, objects: “Death was to be the consequence of his disobedience; and the death here threatened can be opposed only to that life God gave Adam when he created him.”

To this it has been replied,—

“True: But how are you assured, that God, when he created him, did not give him spiritual, as well as animal, life? Now, spiritual death is opposed to spiritual life. And this is more than the death of the body.

“‘But this,’ you say, ‘is pure conjecture, without a solid foundation. For no other life is spoken of before.’ Yes, there is. ‘The image of God’ is spoken of before. This is not, therefore, pure conjecture; but is grounded upon a solid foundation, upon the plain word of God. Allowing, then, that ‘Adam could understand it of no other life than that which he had newly received;’ yet would he naturally understand it of the life of God in his soul, as well as of the life of his body. In this light, therefore, the sense of the threatening will stand thus: ‘Thou shalt surely die;’ as if he had said, ‘I have formed thee of the dust of the ground, and breathed into thy nostrils the breath of lives, both of animal and spiritual life;’ and in both respects thou art become a living soul. But if thou eatest of the forbidden tree, thou shalt cease to be a living soul. For I will take from thee the lives I have given, and thou shalt die spiritually, temporally, eternally.’”*

The answer of President Edwards is more at large:—

“To this I would say, It is true, death is opposed to life, and must be understood according to the nature of that life to

* Wesley On Original Sin.

which it is opposed. But does it therefore follow, that nothing can be meant by it but the loss of life? Misery is opposed to happiness, and sorrow is in Scripture often opposed to joy; but can we conclude from thence, that nothing is meant in Scripture by sorrow, but the loss of joy; or that there is no more in misery, than the loss or absence of happiness? And if the death threatened to Adam can, with certainty, be opposed only to the life given to Adam, when God created him, I think a state of perfect, perpetual, and hopeless misery is properly opposed to that state Adam was in when God created him. For I suppose it will not be denied, that the life Adam had was truly a happy life; happy in perfect innocency, in the favour of his Maker, surrounded with the happy fruits and testimonies of his love. And I think it has been proved, that he also was happy in a state of perfect righteousness. Nothing is more manifest than that it is agreeable to a very common acceptation of the word ‘life’ in Scripture, that it be understood as signifying a state of excellent and happy existence. Now, that which is most opposite to that life and state in which Adam was created, is a state of total, confirmed wickedness, and perfect hopeless misery, under the divine displeasure and curse; not excluding temporal death, or the destruction of the body, as an introduction to it.

“ Besides, that which is much more evident than any thing Dr. T says on this head, is, that the death which was to come on Adam as the punishment of his disobedience, was opposed to that life which he would have had as the reward of his obedience in case he had not sinned. Obedience and disobedience are contraries; the threatenings and promises which are sanctions of a law are set in direct opposition; and the promises, rewards, and threatened punishments are most properly taken as each other’s opposites. But none will deny, that the life which would have been Adam’s reward, if he had persisted in obedience, was eternal life. And therefore we argue justly, that the death which stands opposed to that life, (Dr. T. himself being judge,) is manifestly eternal death, a death widely different from the death we now die,—to use his own words. If Adam, for his persevering obedience was to

have had everlasting life and happiness, in perfect holiness, union with his Maker, and enjoyment of his favour, and this was the life which was to be confirmed by the tree of life; then, doubtless, the death threatened in case of disobedience, which stands in direct opposition to this, was an exposure to everlasting wickedness and misery, in separation from God, and in enduring his wrath.”*

The next question is, whether Adam is to be considered as a mere individual, the consequences of whose misconduct terminated in himself, or no otherwise affected his posterity than incidentally, as the misconduct of an ordinary parent may affect the circumstances of his children; or whether he is to be regarded as a public man, the head and representative of the human race, who, in consequence of his fall, have fallen with him, and received direct hurt and injury in the very constitution of their bodies, and the moral state of their minds.

The testimony of Scripture is so explicit on this point, that all the attempts to evade it have been in vain. In Romans v., Adam and Christ are contrasted in their public or federal character; and the hurt which mankind have derived from the one, and the healing they have received from the other, are also contrasted in various particulars, which are equally represented as the effects of the offence of Adam, and of the obedience of Christ. Adam, indeed, in verse 14, is called, with evident allusion to this public representative character, “the figure” (*τυπος*, “type,” or “model”) “of Him that was to come.” The same Apostle also adopts the phrases, “the first Adam,” and “the second Adam;” which mode of speaking can only be explained on the ground, that as sin and death descended from one, so righteousness and life flow from the other; and that what Christ is to all his spiritual seed, that Adam is to all his natural descendants. On this, indeed, the parallel is founded: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive;” (1 Cor. xv. 22;) words which on any other hypothesis can have no natural signification. Nor is there any weight in

* Original Sin.

the observation, that this relation of Adam to his descendants is not expressly stated in the history of the fall ; since if it were not indicated in that account, the comment of an inspired Apostle is, doubtless, a sufficient authority. But the fact is, that the threatenings pronounced upon the first pair have all respect to their posterity as well as to themselves. The death threatened affects all,—“ in Adam all die ;” “ death entered by sin,” that is, by his sin, and then “ passed upon all men.” The painful childbearing threatened upon Eve has passed on to her daughters. The ground was cursed ; but that affected Adam’s posterity also, who, to this hour, are doomed to eat their bread “ by the sweat of their brow.” Even the first blessing, “ Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it,” was clearly pronounced upon them as public persons, and both by its very terms, and the nature of the thing, since they alone could neither replenish the earth nor subject it to their use and dominion, comprehended their posterity. In all these cases they are addressed in such a form of speech as is appropriated to individuals ; but the circumstances of the case infallibly show, that, in the whole transaction, they stood before their Maker as public persons, and as the legal representatives of their descendants, though in so many words they are not invested with these titles.

The condition in which this federal connexion between Adam and his descendants placed the latter, remains to be exhibited. The imputation of Adam’s sin to his posterity has been a point greatly debated. In the language of theologians, it is considered as mediate or immediate. Our mortality of body and the corruption of our moral nature, in virtue of our derivation from him, is what is meant by the mediate imputation of his sin to us ; by immediate imputation is meant that Adam’s sin is accounted ours, in the sight of God, by virtue of our federal relation. To support the latter notion, various illustrative phrases have been used ; as, that Adam and his posterity constitute one moral person, and that the whole human race was in him, its head, consenting to his act, &c. This is so little agreeable to that distinct agency which enters into the very notion of an accountable being, that it cannot be maintained,

and it destroys the sound distinction between original and actual sin. It asserts, indeed, the imputation of the actual commission of Adam's sin to his descendants, which is false in fact; makes us stand chargeable with the full latitude of his transgression, and all its attendant circumstances; and constitutes us, separate from all actual voluntary offence, equally guilty with him;—all which are repugnant equally to our consciousness and to the equity of the case.

The other opinion does not, however, appear to go the length of Scripture, which must not be warped by the reasonings of erring man. There is another view of the imputation of the offence of Adam to us, which is more consistent with the testimony of the sacred writings. This is very clearly stated by Dr. Watts, in his answer to Dr. Taylor:—

“When a man has broken the law of his country, and is punished for so doing, it is plain that sin is imputed to him: His wickedness is upon him; he bears his iniquity; that is, he is reputed or accounted guilty; he is condemned and dealt with as an offender.

“But if a man have committed treason, his estate is taken from him and his children; then they bear the iniquity of their father, and his sin is imputed to them also.

“If a man lose his life and estate for murder, and his children thereby become vagabonds, then the blood of the person murdered is said to be upon the murderer, and upon his children also. So the Jews: ‘His blood be on us and on our children.’ Let us and our children be punished for it.

“But it may be asked, ‘How can the acts of the parent's treason be imputed to his little child, since those acts were quite out of the reach of an infant, nor was it possible for him to commit them?’ I answer,—

“Those acts of treason or acts of service are, by a common figure, said to be imputed to the children, when they suffer or enjoy the consequences of their father's treason or eminent service; though the particular actions of treason or service could not be practised by the children. This would easily be understood should it occur in human history. And why not when it occurs in the sacred writings?

“ Sin is taken either for an act of disobedience to a law, or for the legal result of such an act ; that is, the guilt or liability to punishment. Now when we say, ‘ The sin of a traitor is imputed to his children,’ we do not mean, that the act of the father is charged upon the child ; but that the guilt or liability to punishment is so transferred to him, that he suffers banishment or poverty on account of it.

“ Thus the sin of Achan was so imputed to his children, that they were all stoned on account of it. (Josh. vii. 24.) In like manner, the covetousness of Gehazi was imputed to his posterity, (2 Kings v. 27,) when God by his Prophet pronounced, that the leprosy should cleave unto him and to his seed for ever.

“ The Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, use the words ‘ sin’ and ‘ iniquity,’ (both in Hebrew and Greek,) to signify, not only the criminal actions themselves, but also the result and consequences of those actions, that is, the guilt or liability to punishment ; and sometimes the punishment itself, whether it fall upon the original criminal, or upon others on his account.

“ Indeed, when sin or righteousness is said to be imputed to any man, on account of what himself hath done, the words usually denote both the good or evil actions themselves, and the legal result of them. But when the sin or righteousness of one person is said to be imputed to another, then, generally, those words mean only the result thereof ; that is, a liability to punishment on the one hand, and to reward on the other.

“ But let us say what we will, in order to confine the sense of the imputation of sin and righteousness to the legal result, the reward or punishment of good or evil actions ; let us ever so explicitly deny the imputation of the actions themselves to others ; still Dr. Taylor will level almost all his arguments against the imputation of the actions themselves, and then triumph in having demolished what we never built, and in refuting what we never asserted.”

In the sense then above given, we may safely contend for the imputation of Adam’s sin ; and this agrees precisely with

the Apostle Paul, who speaks of the imputation of sin to those who “had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression,” that is, to all who lived between Adam and Moses, and, consequently, to infants who personally had not offended; and also declares, that “by one man’s disobedience many were made,” constituted, accounted, and dealt with as, “sinners,” and treated as though they themselves had actually sinned; for, that this is his sense, is clear from what follows: “So by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous,”—constituted, accounted, and dealt with as such, though not actually righteous, but, in fact, pardoned criminals. The first consequence, then, of this imputation is the death of the body, to which all the descendants of Adam are made liable, and that on account of the sin of Adam,—“Through the offence of one many are dead.” But though this is the first, it is far from being the only, consequence. For, as throughout the Apostle’s reasoning in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, to which reference has been made, “the gift,” “the free gift,” “the gift by grace,” mean one and the same thing, even the whole benefit given by the abounding grace of God, through the obedience of Christ; and as these verses are evidently parallel to 1 Corinthians xv. 22, “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive;” “it follows, that dying and being made alive, in the latter passage, do not refer to the body only; but that dying implies all the evils temporal and spiritual which are derived from Adam’s sin, and being made alive, all the blessings which are derived from Christ in time and in eternity.”*

The second consequence is, therefore, death spiritual, that moral state which arises from the withdrawment of that intercourse of God with the human soul, in consequence of its becoming polluted, and of that influence upon it which is the only source and spring of the right and vigorous direction and employment of its powers in which its rectitude consists; a deprivation, from which a depravation consequently and necessarily follows. This, we have before seen, was included in the

* Wesley On Original Sin.

original threatening ; and if Adam was a public person, a representative, it has passed on to his descendants, who, in their natural state, are therefore said to be “ dead in trespasses and sins.” Thus it is that “ the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ;” and that all evils naturally proceed from it, as corrupt streams from a corrupt fountain.

The third consequence is eternal death, separation from God, and endless banishment from his glory in a future state. This follows from both the above premises ;—from the federal character of Adam ; and from the eternal life given by Christ being opposed by the Apostle to the death derived from Adam. The justice of this is objected to,—a point which will be immediately considered ; but it is now sufficient to say, that if the making the descendants of Adam liable to eternal death, because of his offence, be unjust, the infliction of temporal death is so also ; the duration of the punishment making no difference in the simple question of justice. If punishment, whether of loss or of pain, be unjust, its measure and duration may be a greater or a less injustice ; but it is unjust in every degree. If, then, we only confine the hurt we have received from Adam to bodily death ; if this legal result of his transgression only be imputed to us, and we are so constituted sinners as to become liable to it ; we are in precisely the same difficulty, as to the equity of the proceeding, as when that legal result is extended further. The only way out of this dilemma is that adopted by Dr. Taylor,—to consider death, not as a punishment, but as a blessing ; which involves the absurdity of making Deity threaten a benefit as a penalty for an offence, which sufficiently refutes the notion.

The objections which have been raised against the imputation of Adam’s offence, in the extent we have stated it, on the ground of the justice of the proceeding, are of two kinds. The former are levelled, not against that scriptural view of the case which has just been exhibited, but against that repulsive and shocking perversion of it which is found in the high Calvinistic creed, which consigns infants, not elect, to a conscious and endless punishment, and that not of loss only, but of pain, for this first offence of another. The latter springs from

regarding the legal part of the whole transaction which affected our first parents and their posterity, separately from the evangelical provision of mercy which was concurrent with it, and which included, in like manner, both them and their whole race. With the high Calvinistic view we have now nothing to do. It will stand or fall with the doctrines of election and reprobation, as held by that school ; and these will be examined in their place. The latter class of objections now claim our attention ; and as to them we observe, that, as the question relates to the moral government of God, if one part of the transaction before us is intimately and inseparably connected with another and collateral procedure, it cannot, certainly, be viewed in its true light but in that connexion. The redemption of man by Christ, doubtless, was not an after-thought brought in upon man's apostasy ; it was a provision ; and when man fell, he found justice hand in hand with mercy. What are, then, the facts of the whole case ? For greater clearness, let us take Adam, and the case of his adult descendants, first. All became liable to bodily death : Here was justice ; the end of which is to support law, as that supports government. By means of the anticipated sacrifice of the Redeemer's atonement, which, as we shall in its place show, is an effectual means of declaring the justice of God, the sentence is reversed, not by exemption from bodily death, but by a happy and glorious resurrection. For, as this was an act of grace, Almighty God was free to choose, speaking humanly, the circumstances under which it should be administered, in ordering which the unerring wisdom of God had its natural influence. The evil of sin was still to be kept visible before the universe, for its admonition, by the actual infliction of death upon all men ; the grace was to be manifested in reparation of the loss, by restoration to immortality. Again : God, the Fountain of spiritual life, forsook the soul of Adam, now polluted by sin, and unfit for his residence. He became morally dead and corrupt ; and, as "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," this is the natural state of his descendants. Here was justice, a display of the evil of sin, and of the penalty which it ever immediately induces,—man forsaken by God, and, thus forsaken, a picture

to the whole universe of corruption and misery, resulting from that departure from him which is implied in one sinful act. But that spiritual, quickening influence visits him from another quarter, and through other means. The second Adam "is a quickening Spirit." The Holy Spirit is the purchase of his redemption, to be given to man, that he may again infuse into his corrupted nature the heavenly life, and sanctify and regenerate it. Here is the mercy. As to a future state, eternal life is promised to all men believing in Christ, which reverses the sentence of eternal death. Here, again, is the manifestation of mercy. Should this be rejected, he stands liable to the whole penalty, to the punishment of loss as the natural consequence of his corrupted nature, which renders him unfit for heaven; to the punishment even of pain for the original offence, we may also, without injustice, say, as to an adult, whose actual transgressions, when the means of deliverance have been afforded him by Christ, is a consenting to all rebellion against God, and to that of Adam himself; and to the penalty of his own actual transgressions, aggravated by his having made light of the Gospel. Here is the collateral display of justice. In all this, it is impossible to impeach the equity of the divine procedure, since no man suffers any loss or injury ultimately by the sin of Adam, but by his own wilful obstinacy; the "abounding of grace" by Christ having placed before all men, upon their believing, not merely compensation for the loss and injury sustained by Adam, but infinitely higher blessings, both in kind and degree, than were forfeited in him. As to adults, then, the objection taken from divine justice is unsupported.

We now come to the case of persons dying in infancy. The great consideration which leads to a solution of this case is found in Romans v. 18: "Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." In these words, the sin of Adam, and the merits of Christ, are pronounced to be co-extensive; the words applied to both are precisely the same,—"judgment came upon all men," "the free gift came upon all men." If

the whole human race be meant in the former clause, the whole human race is meant in the latter also ; and it follows, that as all are injured by the offence of Adam, so all are benefited by the obedience of Christ. Whatever, therefore, that benefit may be, all children dying in infancy must partake of it, or there would be a large portion of the human race upon whom the "free gift," the effects of "the righteousness of One," did not come, which is contrary to the Apostle's words.

This benefit, whatever it might be, did not so "come upon all men" as to relieve them immediately from the sentence of death. This is obvious, from men being still liable to die, and from the existence of a corrupt nature or spiritual death in all mankind. As this is the case with adults, who grow up from a state of childhood, and who can both trace the corruptness of their nature to their earliest years, and were always liable to bodily death ; so, for this reason, it did not come immediately upon children, whether they die in infancy, or not. For there is no more reason to conclude that those children who die in infancy were born with a pure nature, than they who live to manhood ; and the fact of their being born liable to death, a part of the penalty, is sufficient to show, that they were born under the whole malediction.

The "free gift," however, which has come upon all men, by the righteousness of One, is said to be "unto justification of life," the full reversal of the penalty of death ; and, by "the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness," the benefit extends to the "reigning in life by one, Jesus Christ." If the "free gift" is so given to all men that this is the end for which it is given, then is this "justification of life," and this "reigning in life by Jesus Christ," as truly within the reach of infants dying in infancy, as within the reach of adults living to years of choice. This "free gift" is bestowed upon "all men," *εἰς*, "in order to, justification of life ;" it follows, then, that, in the case of infants, this gift may be connected with the end for which it was given, as well as in the case of adults, or it would be given in vain, and in fact be, in no sense whatever, a gift or benefit, standing opposed, in its result, to condemnation and death.

Now, we know clearly by what means the "free gift," which is bestowed "in order to justification of life," (that is, that act of God by which a sinner, under sentence of death, is adjudged to life,) is connected with that end in the case of adults. The gift comes upon them, in its effects, very largely, independent of any thing they do, in the long-suffering of God; in the instructions of the Gospel; the warnings of Ministers; the corrective dispensations of Providence; above all, in preventing grace and the influences of the Holy Spirit removing so much of their spiritual death as to excite in them various degrees of religious feeling, and enabling them to seek the face of God, to turn at his rebuke, and, by improving that grace, to repent and believe the Gospel. In a word, "justification of life" is offered them; nay, more, it is pressed upon them, and they fail of it only by rejecting it. If they yield, and embrace the offer, then the end for which "the free gift came" upon them is attained,—"justification of life."

As to infants, they are not, indeed, born justified and regenerate: So that to say that "original sin is taken away, as to infants, by Christ," is not the correct view of the subject, for the reasons before given; but they are all born under the "free gift," the effects of the righteousness of One, which extended to "all men;" and this free gift is bestowed on them in order to justification of life,—the adjudging of the condemned to live. All the mystery in the case, therefore, arises from this, that in adults we see the free gift connected with its end, actual justification, by acts of their own, repentance and faith; but as to infants, we are not informed by what process justification, with its attendant blessings, is actually bestowed, though the words of the Apostle are express, that through "the righteousness of One" they are entitled to it. Nor is it surprising, that this process should be hidden from us, since the Gospel was written for adults, though the benefit of it is designed for all; and the knowledge of this work of God, in the spirit of an infant, must pre-suppose an acquaintance with the properties of the human soul, which is, in fact, out of our reach. If, however, an infant is not capable of a voluntary acceptance of the benefit of the "free gift;"

neither, on the other hand, is it capable of a voluntary rejection of it ; and it is by rejecting it that adults perish. If much of the benefit of this “ free gift ” comes upon us as adults, independent of our seeking it ; and if, indeed, the very power and inclination to seek justification of life is thus prevenient, and in the highest sense, free ; it follows, by the same rule of the divine conduct, that the Holy Spirit may be given to children ; that a divine and an effectual influence may be exerted on them, which, meeting with no voluntary resistance, shall cure the spiritual death and corrupt tendency of their nature ; and all this, without supposing any great difference in the principle of the administration of this grace in their case and that of adults. But the different circumstances of children dying in their infancy, and adults, prove also that a different administration of the same grace, which is freely bestowed upon all, must take place. Adults are personal offenders ; infants are not : For the former, confession of sin, repentance, and the trust of persons consciously perishing for their transgressions, are appropriate to their circumstances ; but not to those of the latter ; and the very wisdom of God may assure us, that, in prescribing the terms of salvation, that is, the means by which the “ free gift ” shall pass to its issue, justification of life, the circumstances of the persons must be taken into account. The reason of pardon, in every case, is not repentance, not faith, not any thing done by man, but the merit of the sacrifice of Christ. Repentance and faith are, it is true, in the case of adults, a *sine quâ non*, but in no sense the meritorious cause. The reasons of their being attached to the promise, as conditions, are nowhere given ; but they are nowhere enforced as such, except on adults. If, in adults, we see the meritorious cause working in conjunction with instrumental causes, they are capable of what is required ; but when we see, even in adults, that, independent of their own acts, the meritorious cause is not inert, but fruitful in vital influence and gracious dealing, we see such a separation of the operation of the grand meritorious cause, and the subordinate instrumental causes, as to prove that the benefits of the death of Christ are not, in every degree, and, consequently, on the same principle, not, in

every case, conferred under the restraints of conditions. So certainly is infant salvation attested by the Scriptures; so explicitly are we told that the free gift is come upon all men to justification of life, and that none can come short of this blessing but those who reject it.

But there is another class of instrumental causes to be taken into the account in the case of children; though they arise not out of their personal acts. The first and greatest and general one, is the intercession of Christ himself, which can never be fruitless: And that children are the objects of his intercession is certain, both from his office as the Intercessor of all mankind, the "Mediator between God and man," that is, all men; and from his actually praying for children in the days of his abode on earth: "He took them up in his arms, and blessed them;" which benediction was either in the form of prayer, or it was authoritative, which makes the case still stronger. As to their future state, he seems also to open a sufficiently encouraging view, when he declares that "of such is the kingdom of heaven:" For, whether we understand this of future felicity, or of the church, the case is settled; in neither instance can they be under wrath, and liable to condemnation.

Other instrumental causes of the communication of this benefit to infants, wherever the ordinances of the Christian church are established, and used in faith, are the prayers of parents, and baptism in the name of Christ; means which cannot be without their effect, both as to infants who die, and those who live; and which, as God's own ordinances, he cannot but honour, in different degrees, it may be, as to those who live, and those whom he intends to call to himself; but which are still means of grace, and channels of saving influence; or they are dead forms, ill becoming that which is so eminently a dispensation, not of the letter, but of the spirit.

The injustice, then, alleged as implicated in the doctrine of original sin, when considered in this its whole and scriptural view, entirely vanishes; and, at the same time, the evil of sin is manifested, and the justice, also, of the Lawgiver,—for mercy comes not by relaxing the hold of justice. That still

has its full manifestation in the exaction of vicarious obedience to death, even the death of the cross, from the second Adam, who made himself the federal head of fallen men, and gave "justification unto life" only by his submission to "judgment unto condemnation."

Having thus established the import of the death threatened as the penalty of Adam's transgression, to include corporal, moral, or spiritual, and eternal death; and showed that the sentence included also the whole of his posterity; our next step is to ascertain that moral condition in which men are actually born into the world, notwithstanding that gracious provision which is made in Christ for human redemption. On this the testimony of Scripture is so explicit and ample, and its humbling representations are so borne out by consciousness and by experience, that it may well be matter of surprise, that the natural innocence of human nature should ever have had its advocates, at least among those who profess to receive the Bible as the word of God. In entering upon the subject of this corruption of human nature, it must first be stated, that there are several facts of history and experience to be accounted for; and that they must all be taken into account in the different theories which are advocated.

1. That, in all ages, great and even general wickedness has prevailed among those large masses of men which are called "nations."

So far as it relates to the immediate descendants of Adam before the flood; to all the nations of the highest antiquity; to the Jews throughout every period of their history, down to their final dispersion; and to the empires and other states whose history is involved in theirs; we have the historical evidence of Scripture, and much collateral evidence also from their own historians.

To what does this evidence go but, to say the least, to prove the actual depravity of the majority of mankind in all these ages, and among all these nations? As to the race before the flood, a murderer sprang up in the first family, and the world became increasingly corrupt, until "God saw that the wickedness of man was great, and that every imagination

of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually ;” “ that all flesh had corrupted their way upon earth ;” and that “ the earth was filled with violence through them.” Only Noah was found righteous before God ; and because of the universal wickedness,—a wickedness which spurned all warning, and resisted all correction,—the flood was brought upon the world of the ungodly, as a testimony of divine anger.

The same course of increasing wickedness is exhibited in the sacred records as taking place after the flood. The building of the tower of Babel was a wicked act done by general concert, before the division of nations : This we know from its having excited the divine displeasure, though we know not in what the particular crime consisted. After the division of nations, the history of the times of Abraham, Lot, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses, sufficiently shows that idolatry, injustice, oppression, and gross sensualities, characterized the people of Canaan, Egypt, and every other country mentioned in the Mosaic narrative.

The obstinate inclination of the Israelites to idolatry, through all ages to the Babylonish captivity, and the general prevalence of vice among men, are acknowledged in every part of the Old Testament. Their moral wickedness, after their return from Babylon, when they no longer practised idolatry, and were, therefore, delivered from that most fruitful source of crime, may be collected from the writers of the Old Testament who lived after that event ; and their general corruption in the time of our Lord and his Apostles stands forth with disgusting prominence in their writings, and in the writings of Josephus, their own historian.

As to all other ancient nations, of whom we have any history, the accounts agree in stating the general prevalence of practical immorality and of malignant and destructive passions : And, if we had no such acknowledgments from themselves ; if no such reproaches were mutually cast upon each other ; if history were not, as indeed it is, a record of crimes, in action and in detail ; and if poets, moralists, and satirists, did not all give their evidence, by assuming that men were influenced by general principles of vice, expressing themselves in particular

modes in different ages, the following great facts would prove the case :—

The fact of general religious error, and that in the very fundamental principles of religion, such as the existence of one only God ; which universal corruption of doctrine among all the ancient nations mentioned above shows both indifference to truth, and hostility against it ; and therefore proves, at least, the general corruption of men's hearts, of which even indifference to religious truth is a sufficient indication.

The universal prevalence of idolatry ; which not only argues great debasement of intellect, but deep wickedness of heart ; because, in all ages, idolatry has been more or less immoral in its influence, and generally grossly so, by leading directly to sanguinary and impure practices.

The prevalence of superstition wherever idolatry has prevailed, and often when that has not existed, is another proof. The essence of this evil is the transfer of fear and hope from God to real or imaginary creatures and things, and so is a renunciation of allegiance to God, as the Governor of the world, and a practical denial either of his being or his providence.

Aggressive wars, in the guilt of which all nations and all uncivilized tribes have been, in all ages, involved, and which necessarily suppose hatred, revenge, cruelty, injustice, and ambition.

The accounts formerly given of the innocence and harmlessness of the Hindoos, Chinese, the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands, and other parts of the world, are now found to be total mistakes or wilful falsehoods.

In all heathen nations, idolatry, superstition, fraud, oppression, and vices of almost every description, show the general state of society to be exceedingly, and even destructively, corrupt ; and though Mahometan nations escape the charge of idolatry, yet pride, avarice, oppression, injustice, cruelty, sensuality, and gross superstition, are all prevalent among them.

The case of Christian nations, though in them immorality is more powerfully checked than in any other, and many bright

and influential examples of the highest virtue are found among their inhabitants, sufficiently proves that the majority are corrupt and vicious in their habits. The impiety and profaneness; the neglect of the fear and worship of God; the fraud and villany continually taking place in the commerce of mankind; the intemperance of various kinds which is found among all classes; the oppression of the poor, and many other evils, are in proof of this: And, indeed, we may confidently conclude, that no advocate of the natural innocence of man will contend that the majority of men, even in this country, are actually virtuous in their external conduct; and, much less, that the fear and love of God, and habitual respect to his will, which are, indeed, the only principles that can be deemed to constitute a person righteous, influence the people at large, or even any very large proportion of them.

The fact, then, is established, which was before laid down, that men in all ages and in all places have, at least, been generally wicked.

2. The second fact to be accounted for is, the strength of that tendency to the wickedness which we have seen to be general.

The strength of the corrupting principle, whatever it may be, is marked by two circumstances:—

The first is, the greatness of the crimes to which men have abandoned themselves.

If the effects of the corrupt principle had only been manifested in trifling errors and practical infirmities, a softer view of the moral condition in which man is born into the world might, probably, have been admitted; but in the catalogue of human crimes, in all ages, and among great numbers of all nations, but more especially among those nations where there has been the least control of religion, and, therefore, where the natural dispositions of men have exhibited themselves under the simplest and most convincing evidence, we find frauds, oppressions, faithlessness, barbarous cruelties and murders, unfeeling oppressions, falsehoods, every kind of uncleanness, uncontrolled anger, deadly hatred and revenge, as to their fellow-creatures, and proud and scornful rebellion against God.

The second is, the number and influence of the checks and restraints against which this tide of wickedness has urged on its almost resistless and universal course.

It has opposed itself against the law of God, in some degree found among all men ; consequently, against the checks and remorse of conscience ; against a settled conviction of the evil of most of the actions indulged in, which is shown by their having been blamed in others (at least, whenever any have suffered by them) by those who themselves have been in the habit of committing them.

Against the restraints of human laws, and the authority of Magistrates ; for, in all ancient states, the moral corruption continued to spread until they were politically dissolved, society not being able to hold itself together, in consequence of the excessive height to which long indulgence had raised passion and appetite.

Against the provision made to check human vices by that judicial act of the Governor of the world, by which he shortened the life of man, and rendered it uncertain, and, at the longest, brief.

Against another provision made by the Governor of the world, in part with the same view, that is, the dooming of man to earn his sustenance by labour, and thus providing for the occupation of the greater portion of time in what was innocent, and rendering the means of sensual indulgences more scanty, and the opportunities of actual immorality more limited.

Against the restraints put upon vice by rendering it, by the constitution and the very nature of things, the source of misery of all kinds and degrees, national, domestic, personal, mental, and bodily.

Against the terrible judgments which God has, in all ages, brought upon wicked nations and notorious individuals, many of which visitations were known and acknowledged to be the signal manifestations of his displeasure against their vices.

Against those counteractive and reforming influences of the revelations of the will and mercy of God which, at different

times, have been vouchsafed to the world : As, against the light and influence of the patriarchal religion before the giving of the law ; against the Mosaic institute, and the warnings of Prophets among the Jews ; against the religious knowledge which was transmitted from them among heathen nations connected with their history, at different periods ; against the influence of Christianity when introduced into the Roman empire, and when transmitted to the Gothic nations, by all of whom it was grossly corrupted ; and against the control of the same divine religion in our own country, where it is exhibited in its purity, and in which the most active endeavours are adopted to enlighten and correct society.

It is impossible to consider the number and power of these checks without acknowledging, that those principles in human nature which give rise to the mass of moral evil which actually exists, and has always existed since men began to multiply upon the earth, are most powerful and formidable in their tendency.

3. The third fact is, that the seeds of the vices which exist in society may be discovered in children in their earliest years ; selfishness, envy, pride, resentment, deceit, lying, and often cruelty ; and so much is this the case, so explicitly is this acknowledged by all, that it is the principal object of the moral branch of education to restrain and correct those evils, both by coercion, and by diligently impressing upon children, as their faculties open, the evil and mischief of all such affections and tendencies.

4. The fourth fact is, that every man is conscious of a natural tendency to many evils.

These tendencies are different in degree and in kind.* In some they move to ambition, and pride, and excessive love of honour ; in others, to anger, revenge, and implacableness ; in others, to cowardice, meanness, and fear ; in others, to avarice, care, and distrust ; in others, to sensuality and prodigality. But where is the man who has not his peculiar constitutional

* *Omnia in omnibus vitia sunt ; sed non omnia in singulis extant.*—

tendency to some evil in one of these classes? But there are, also, evil tendencies common to all. These are, to love creatures more than God; to forget God; to be indifferent to our obligations to him; to regard the opinions of men more than the approbation of God; to be more influenced by the visible things which surround us than by the invisible God, whose eye is ever upon us, and by that invisible state to which we are all hastening.

It is the constant practice of those who advocate the natural innocence of man, to lower the standard of the divine law under which man is placed; and to this they are necessarily driven, in order to give some plausibility to their opinions. They must palliate the conduct of men; and this can only be done by turning moral evils into natural ones, or into innocent infirmities, and by so stating the requisitions made upon our obedience by our Maker, as to make them consistent with many irregularities. But we have already shown, that the law of God requires our supreme love and our entire obedience; and it will, therefore, follow, that whatever is contrary to love and to entire subjection, whether in principle, in thought, in word, and in action, is sinful; and, if so, then the tendency to evil in every man must and will, on these premises, be allowed. Nor will it serve any purpose to say, that man's weakness and infirmity are such that he cannot yield this perfect obedience; for means of sanctification and supernatural aid are provided for him in the Gospel: And what is it that renders him indifferent to them, but the corruptness of his heart?

Besides, this very plea allows all we contend for. It allows that the law is lowered, because of human inability to observe it and to resist temptation; but this itself proves, (were we even to admit the fiction of this lowering of the requisitions of the law,) that man is not now in the state in which he was created, or it would not have been necessary to bring the standard of obedience down to his impaired condition.

5. The fifth fact is, that, even after a serious wish and intention has been formed in men to renounce these vices, and "to live righteously, soberly, and godly," as becomes creatures made to glorify God, and on their trial for eternity, strong and

constant resistance is made by the passions, appetites, and inclinations of the heart, at every step of the attempt.

This is so clearly a matter of universal experience, that, in the moral writings of every age and country, and in the very phrases and terms of all languages, virtue is associated with difficulty, and represented under the notion of a warfare. Virtue has always, therefore, been represented as the subject of acquirement ; and resistance of evil as being necessary to its preservation. It has been made to consist in self-rule, which is, of course, restraint upon opposite tendencies ; the mind is said to be subject to diseases ;* and the remedy for these diseases is placed in something outward to itself,—in religion, among inspired men ; in philosophy, among the Heathen.†

This constant struggle against the rules and resolves of virtue has been acknowledged in all ages, and among Christian nations more especially, where, just as the knowledge of what the divine law requires is diffused, the sense of the difficulty of approaching to its requisitions is felt ; and in proportion as the efforts made to conform to it are sincere, is the despair which arises from repeated and constant defeats, when the aid of divine grace is not called in. “O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?”

These five facts of universal history and experience, as they cannot be denied, and as it would be most absurd to discuss the moral condition of human nature without any reference to them, must be accounted for ; and it shall now be our business to inquire, whether they can be best explained on the hypothesis drawn from the Scripture, that man is by nature totally corrupt and degenerate, and of himself incapable of any good thing ; or, on the hypothesis of man’s natural goodness, or, at worst, his natural indifference equally to good and to evil ;—notions which come to us *ab initio* with this disadvantage, that

* *Hâc conditione nati sumus, animalia obnoxia non paucioribus animi quam corporis morbis.*—SENECA.

† *Videamus quanta sint quæ a philosophiâ remedia morbis animorum adhibentur ; est enim quædam medicina certè, &c.*—CICERO.

they have no text of Scripture to adduce to afford them any plausible support whatever.

The testimony of Scripture is decidedly in favour of the first hypothesis.

It has already been established, that the full penalty of Adam's offence passed upon his posterity ; and, consequently, that part of it which consists in the spiritual death which has been before explained. A full provision to meet this case is, indeed, as we have seen, made in the Gospel ; but that does not affect the state in which men are born. It is a cure for an actually existing disease brought by us into the world ; for, were not this the case, the evangelical institution would be one of prevention, not of remedy, under which light it is always represented.

If, then, we are all born in a state of spiritual death ; that is, without that vital influence of God upon our faculties which we have seen to be necessary to give them a right, a holy tendency, and to maintain them in it ; and if that is restored to man by a dispensation of grace and favour, it follows that, in his natural state, he is born with sinful propensities, and that, by nature, he is capable, in his own strength, of " no good thing."

With this the scriptural account agrees.

It is probable, though great stress need not be laid upon it, that when it is said, that " Adam begat a son in his own likeness," (Gen. v. 3,) there is an implied opposition between the likeness of God, in which Adam was made, and the likeness of Adam, in which his son was begotten. It is not said, that he begat a son in the likeness of God ; a very appropriate expression, if Adam had not fallen, and if human nature had sustained, in consequence, no injury ; and such a declaration was apparently called for, had this been the case, to show, what would have been a very important fact, that, notwithstanding the personal delinquency of Adam, yet human nature itself had sustained no deterioration, but was propagated without corruption. On the contrary, it is said, that he " begat a son in his own likeness ;" which, probably, was mentioned on purpose to exclude the idea, that the image of God was hereditary in man.

In Genesis vi. 5, it is stated, as the cause of the flood, that “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Here, it is true, that the actual moral state of the antediluvians may only be spoken of, and that the text does not directly prove the doctrine of hereditary depravity; yet is the actual wickedness of man traced up to the heart, as its natural source, in a manner which seems to intimate, that the doctrine of the natural corruption of man was held by the writer, and by that his mode of expression was influenced. “The heart of man is here put for his soul. This God had formed with a marvellous thinking power. But so is his soul debased, that every imagination, figment, formation of the thoughts of it, is evil, only evil, continually evil. Whatever it forms within itself as a thinking power, is an evil formation. If all men’s actual wickedness sprung from the evil formation of their corrupt heart, and if, consequently, they were sinners from the birth, so are all others likewise.”*

That this was the theological sentiment held and taught by Moses, and implied even in this passage, is made very clear by Genesis viii. 21: “I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake: For the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every living thing.” The sense of which plainly is, that, notwithstanding the wickedness of mankind, though they sin from their childhood, yet would he not, on that account, again destroy “every living thing.” Here it is to be observed, 1. That the words are spoken as soon as Noah came forth from the ark, and, therefore, after the antediluvian race of actual and flagrant transgressors had perished, and before the family of Noah had begun to multiply upon the earth; when, in fact, there were no human beings upon earth but righteous Noah and his family. 2. That they are spoken of man as man; that is, of human nature, and, consequently, of Noah himself and the persons saved with him in the ark. 3. That

it is affirmed of man, that is, of mankind, that the imagination of the heart "is evil from his youth." Now the term "imagination" includes the thoughts, affections, and inclinations; and the word "youth," the whole time from the birth, the earliest age of man. This passage, therefore, affirms the natural and hereditary tendency of man to evil.

The book of Job, which embodies the patriarchal theology, gives ample testimony to this as the faith of those ancient times: "Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt;" (Job xi. 12;) fierce, untractable, and scarcely to be subjected. This is the case from his birth; it is affirmed of man, and is equally applicable to every age; it is his natural condition, he is born, literally, the colt of a wild ass.

"Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward;" (Job v. 7;) that is, he is inevitably subjected to trouble; this is the law of his state in this world, as fixed and certain as one of the laws of nature. The proof from this passage is inferential, but very decisive. Unless man is born a sinner, it is not to be accounted for, that he should be born to trouble. Pain and death are the consequences only of sin, and absolutely innocent beings must be exempt from them.

"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" (Job xiv. 4.) The word "thing" is supplied by our translators, but "person" is evidently understood. Cleanness and uncleanness, in the language of Scripture, signify sin and holiness; and the text clearly asserts the natural impossibility of any man being born sinless, because he is produced by guilty and defiled parents.

"What is man, that he should be clean; and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?" (Job xv. 14.) The same doctrine is here affirmed as in the preceding text, only more fully; and it may be taken as an explanation of the former, which was, perhaps, a proverbial expression. The rendering of the LXX. is here worthy of notice; for though it does not agree with the present Hebrew text, it strongly marks the sentiments of the ancient Jews on the point in question:

“Who shall be clean from filth? Not one; even though his life on earth be a single day.”

“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” (Psalm li. 5.) What possible sense can be given to this passage, on the hypothesis of man’s natural innocence? It is in vain to render the first clause, “I was brought forth in iniquity;” for nothing is gained by it. David charges nothing upon his mother, of whom he is not speaking, but of himself. He was conceived, or, if it please better, was born, a sinner. And if the rendering of the latter clause were allowed, which yet has no authority, “in sin did my mother nurse me;” still no progress is made in getting quit of its testimony to the moral corruption of children: For it is the child only which is nursed; and, if that be allowed, natural depravity is allowed,—depravity before reasonable choice; which is the point in question.

“The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.” (Psalm lviii. 3, 4.) They are alienated from the womb; “alienated from the life of God, from the time of their coming into the world.”* “Speaking lies:” They exhibit a tendency to speak lies as soon as they are capable of it; which shows the existence of a natural principle of falsehood.

“Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.” “The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.” (Prov. xxii. 15; xxix. 15.) “These passages put together are a plain testimony of the inbred corruption of young children. ‘Foolishness,’ in the former, is not barely ‘appetite,’ or a want of the knowledge attainable by instruction, as some have said. Neither of these deserves that sharp correction recommended. But it is an indisposedness to what is good, and a strong propensity to evil. This foolishness ‘is bound up in the heart of a child;’ it is rooted in his inmost nature. It is, as it were, fastened to him by strong cords; so the original word signifies. From this corruption

* Wesley.

of the heart in every child, it is that ‘the rod of correction’ is necessary to give him wisdom ; hence it is that ‘a child, left to himself,’ without correction, ‘brings his mother to shame.’ If a child were born equally inclined to virtue and vice, why should the wise man speak of foolishness, or wickedness, as fastened so closely to his heart ? And why should the rod and reproof be so necessary for him ? These texts, therefore, are another clear proof of the corruption of human nature.”*

The quotation of Psalm xiv. 2, 3, by the Apostle Paul, in Rom. iii. 10, &c., is also an important scriptural proof of the universal moral corruption of mankind : “The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy ; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” When the Psalmist affirms this of the children of men, it is fair to conclude that he is speaking of all men, and of human nature as originating actual depravity ; and it is, indeed, obvious, from the context, that he is thus accounting for Atheism and other evils, the prevalence of which he laments. But, as the Apostle quotes this passage and the parallel one in the fifty-third psalm as scriptural proofs of the universal corruption of mankind, the sense of the Psalmist is fixed by his authority, and cannot be questioned. All, indeed, that the opponents of this interpretation can say is, that, in the same psalm, the Psalmist speaks also of righteous persons, “God is in the generation of the righteous ;” but that is nothing to the purpose, seeing that those who contend for the universal corruption of mankind allow also that a remedy has been provided for the evil ; and that by its application some, in every age, have been made righteous, who were originally and naturally sinful. In fact, it could not be said, with respect to men’s actual moral conduct in that, or, probably, in any age, that “not one” was “righteous ;” but in every age it may be said, that not one is so originally, or by nature ; so that the passage is not to be explained on the

assumption that the inspired writer is speaking only of the practice of mankind in his own times.

Of the same kind are all those passages which speak of what is morally evil as the characteristic and distinguishing mark, not of any individual, not of any particular people, living in some one age or part of the world ; but of man, of human nature ; and especially those which make sinfulness the natural state of that part of the human race who have not undergone the moral renovation which is the fruit of a divine operation in the heart, a work ascribed particularly to the Holy Spirit. Of these texts the number is very great ; and it adds also to the strength of their evidence, that the subject is often mentioned incidentally, and by way of illustration and argument in support of something else ; and must, therefore, be taken to be an acknowledged and settled opinion among the sacred writers, both of the Old and New Testament, and one which neither they nor those to whom they spoke or wrote questioned or disputed.

“Cursed,” says the Prophet Jeremiah, “is he that trusteth in man.” Why “in man,” if he were not, by nature, unworthy of trust ? On the scheme of man’s natural innocence, it would surely have been more appropriate to say, “Cursed be he that trusteth indiscriminately in men,” some of whom may have become corrupt ; but here human nature itself, man, in the abstract, is held up to suspicion and caution. “The heart,” proceeds the same Prophet, “is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked : Who can know it ?” which is the reason adduced for the caution preceding, against trusting in man. It is precisely in the same way that our Lord designates human nature, when he affirms, that “from within, out of the heart, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, murders, &c. ; all these things come from within, and defile the man.” This representation would not be true, on the scheme of natural innocence : All these things would come from without, not from within, as their original source. The heart must first be corrupted by outward circumstances, before it could be the corrupter.

But, to proceed with instances of the more incidental refer-

ences to the fault and disease of man's very nature, with which the Scriptures abound: "How much more abominable and filthy is man, who drinketh iniquity like water!" (Job xv. 16.) "Madness is in the heart of the sons of men whilst they live." (Eccles. ix. 3.) "But they like men have transgressed the covenant." (Hosea vi. 7.) "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children." (Matt. vii. 11.) "Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." (Matt. xvi. 23.) "Are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (1 Cor. iii. 3.) "That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the lusts of men, but to the will of God." (1 Peter iv. 2.) "We are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." (1 John v. 19.) "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.) "That ye put off the old man, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man." (Eph. iv. 22—24.)

The above texts are to be considered as specimens of the manner in which the sacred writers speak of the subject, rather than as approaching to an enumeration of the passages in which the same sentiments are found in great variety of expression, and which are adduced on various occasions. They are, however, sufficient to show that man, and the heart of man, and the moral nature of man, are spoken of by them in a way not to be reconciled to the notion of their purity, or even their indifference to good and evil. On two parts of the New Testament, however, which irresistibly fix the whole of this evidence in favour of the opinion of the universal church of Christ, in all ages, our remarks may be somewhat more extended. The first is our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus, (John iii.,) in which he declares the necessity of a new birth, in contradistinction to our natural birth, in order to our entrance into the kingdom of God; and lays it down, that the Spirit of God is the sole author of this change, and that what is born of the flesh cannot alter its nature; it is flesh still, and must always remain so, and in that state is unfit for heaven. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh,

and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Throughout the New Testament, it will be found, that when flesh and Spirit are, in a moral sense, opposed to each other, the one means the corrupt nature and habits of men, not sanctified by the Gospel ; the other, either the principle and habit of holiness in good men, or the Holy Spirit himself, who imparts and constantly nurtures them. "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." (Rom. vii. 18.) "I myself with the mind serve the law of God ; but with the flesh, the law of sin." (Rom. vii. 25.) "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. viii. 1.) "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh ; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death ; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." (Rom. viii. 5—9.)

These passages from St. Paul serve to fix the meaning of the terms "flesh" and "Spirit," as used by the Jews, and as they occur in the discourse of our Lord with Nicodemus ; and they are so exactly parallel to it, that they fully confirm the opinion of those who understand our Lord as expressly asserting, that man is by nature corrupt and sinful, and unfit, in consequence, for the kingdom of heaven ; and that all amendment of his case must result, not from himself, (so totally is he gone from original righteousness,) but from that special operation of the Holy Spirit which produces a new birth or regeneration. Both assert the natural state of man to be fleshly, that is, morally corrupt ; both assert, that in man himself there is no remedy ; and both attribute principles of holiness to a supernatural agency, the agency of the Spirit of God himself.

No criticism can make this language consistent with the theory of natural innocence. St. Paul describes the state of man, before he comes under the quickening and renewing

influence of the Spirit, as being “in the flesh;” in which state “he cannot please God;” as having a “carnal mind,” which “is not,” and cannot be, “subject to the law of God.” Our Lord, in like manner, describes this state of “the flesh,” this condition of entire unfitness for the kingdom of heaven, as our natural state; and, to make this the stronger, he refers this unfitness for heaven, not to our acquired habits, but to the state in which we are born; for the very reason which he gives for the necessity of a new birth is, that “that which is born of the flesh is flesh,” and, therefore, we “must be born again.” To interpret, therefore, the phrase, “to be flesh, as being born of the flesh,” merely to signify that we are, by natural birth, endowed with the physical powers of human nature, is utterly absurd; for what, then, is it to be “born of the Spirit?” Is it to receive physical powers which do not belong to human nature? Or, if they go a step farther, and admit, that “to be flesh, as being born of the flesh,” means “to be frail and mortal like our parents;” still the interpretation is a physical and not a moral one, and leads to this absurdity, that we must likewise interpret the being “born of the Spirit” physically, and not morally. Now, since the being “born of the Spirit” refers to a change which is effected in time, and not at the resurrection, because our Lord speaks of being “born of water” as well as the Spirit, by which he means “baptism;” and as St. Paul says to the Romans, in the passage above quoted, “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit,” and, therefore, speaks of their present experience in this world; it may be asked, What physical change did, in reality, take place in them in consequence of being “born of the Spirit?” On all hands it is allowed, that none took place, that they remained “frail and mortal” still; and it follows, therefore, that it is a moral and not a physical change which is spoken of, both by our Lord and by the Apostle; and, if a moral change from sin to holiness, then is the natural state of man from his birth, and in consequence of his birth, sinful and corrupt.

The other passage is the argument in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, in which the Apostle proves

both Jews and Gentiles under sin, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God;" and then proposes the means of salvation by faith in Christ, on the express ground that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Whoever reads that argument, and considers the universality of the terms used, "all," "every," "all the world," "both Jews and Gentiles," must conclude, in all fairness of interpretation, that the whole human race of every age is intended. But if any will construe his words partially, then he is placed in the following dilemma: The Apostle grounds the wisdom and mercy of that provision which is made for man's salvation in the Gospel, upon man's sinfulness, danger, and helplessness. Now the Gospel, as a remedy for disease, as salvation from danger, is designed for all men, or but for a part; if for all, then all are diseased and in danger; if but for a part, then the undiseased part of the human race, those who are in no danger, have no interest in the Gospel, it is not adapted to their case; and not only is the argument of the Apostle lost, but those who advocate this notion must explain how it is that our Lord himself commanded the Gospel to be preached "to every creature," if but a part of mankind needs its salvation.

The doctrine, then, of Scripture is, I think, clearly established to be, that of the natural and universal corruption of man's nature; and we now consider whether on this ground, or on the hypothesis of man's natural innocence, or indifference to good or to evil, the facts above enumerated can be best explained. They are, 1. The, at least, general corruption of manners in all times and countries. 2. The strength of the tendency in man to evil. 3. The early appearance of the principles of various vices in children. 4. Every man's consciousness of a natural tendency in his mind to one or more evils. 5. That general resistance to virtue in the heart, which renders education, influence, watchfulness, and conflict, necessary to counteract the force of evil. These points have been already explained more at large; and they are facts which, it is presumed, cannot be denied, and such as have the confirmation of history and experience.

That they are easily and fully accounted for by the scriptural doctrine, is obvious. The fountain is bitter, and the tree is corrupt; the bitter stream and the bad fruit are, therefore, the natural consequences. But the advocates of the latter hypothesis have no means of accounting for these moral phenomena, except by referring them to bad example and a vicious education.

Let us take the first. To account for general wickedness, they refer to general example.

1. But this does not account for the introduction of moral wickedness. The children of Adam were not born until after the repentance of our first parents, and their restoration to the divine favour. They appear to have been his devout worshippers, and to have had access to his presence, the visible glory of the Schechinah. From what example, then, did Cain learn malice, hatred, and, finally, murder? Example will not account, also, for the too common fact of the children of highly virtuous parents becoming immoral; for, since the examples nearest to them, and constantly present with them, are good examples, if the natural disposition were as good as this hypothesis assumes, the good example always present ought to be more influential than bad examples at a distance, and only occasionally seen or heard of.

2. If men are naturally disposed to good, or only not indisposed to it, it is not accounted for, on this hypothesis, how bad example should have become general, that is, how men should generally have become wicked.

If the natural disposition be more in favour of good than evil, then there ought to have been more good than evil in the world, which is contradicted by fact; if there had been only an indifference in our minds to good and evil, then, at least, the quantum of vice and virtue in society ought to have been pretty equally divided, which is also contrary to fact; and also it ought to have followed from this, that at least all the children of virtuous persons would have been virtuous; that, for instance, the descendants of Seth would have followed in succession the steps of their righteous forefathers, though the children of Cain (passing by the difficulty of his own lapse)

should have become vicious. On neither supposition can the existence of a general evil example in the world be accounted for. It ought not to have existed ; and if so, the general corruption of mankind cannot be explained by it.

3. This very method of explaining the general viciousness of society does itself suppose the power of bad example ; and, indeed, in this it agrees with universal opinion. All the moralists of public and domestic life, all professed teachers, all friends of youth, all parents, have repeated their cautions against evil society to those whom they wished to preserve from vice. The writings of moralists, heathen and inspired, are full of these admonitions, and they are embodied in the proverbs and wise traditional sayings of all civilized nations. But the very force of evil example can only be accounted for, by supposing a proneness in youth to be corrupted by it. Why should it be more influential than good example,—a fact universally acknowledged, and so strongly felt, that, for one person preserved by the sole influence of a good example, every body expects that a great number would be corrupted by an evil one. But if the hypothesis of man's natural innocence were true, this ought not to be expected as a probable, much less as a certain, result. Bad example would meet with resistance from a good nature ; and it would be much more difficult to influence by bad examples than by good ones.

4. Nor does example account for the other facts in the above enumeration. It does not account for that strong bias to evil in men which, in all ages, has borne down the most powerful restraints ; for, from this tendency that corrupt general example has sprung, which is alleged as the cause of it ; and it must, therefore, have existed previously, because the general example, that is, the general corrupt practice of men, is its effect. We cannot, in this way, account for the early manifestation of wrong principles, tempers, and affections, in children ; since they appear at an age when example can have little influence, and even when the surrounding examples are good, as well as when they are evil. Why, too, should virtue always be found more or less a conflict, so that self-government and self-resistance are, in all cases, necessary for its preserva-

tion? The example of others will not account for this; for mere example can only influence when it is approved by the judgment; but here is a case in which evil is not approved, in which "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are pure," are approved, desired, and cultivated; and yet the resistance of the heart to the judgment is so powerful, that a constant warfare and a strict command are necessary to perseverance.

Let us, then, see whether a bad education, the other cause usually alleged to account for these facts, will be more successful.

1. This cause will no more account for the introduction of passions so hateful as those of Cain, issuing in a fratricide so odious, into the family of Adam, than will example. As there was no example of these evils in the primeval family, so, certainly, there was no education which could incite and encourage them. We are, also, left still without a reason why, in well-ordered and religious families, where education and the example, too, are good, so many instances of their inefficacy should occur. If bad education corrupts a naturally well-disposed mind, then a good education ought still more powerfully to affect it, and give it a right tendency. It is allowed, that good example and good education are, in many instances, effectual; but we can account for them, without giving up the doctrine of the natural corruption of the heart: It is, however, impossible for these to account for those failures of both example and instruction which often take place, since, on the hypothesis of man's natural innocence and good disposition, they ought never to occur, or, at least, but in very rare cases, and when some singular counteracting external causes happen to come into operation.

2. We may also ask, How came it to pass, unless there were a predisposing cause to it, that education, as well as example, should have been generally bad? Of education, indeed, men are usually more careful than of example. The lips are often right when the life is wrong; and many practise evil who will not go so far as to teach it. If human nature, then, be born pure, or, at worst, equally disposed to good and

evil, then the existence of a generally corrupting system of education, in all countries, and among all people, cannot be accounted for. We have an effect either contrary to the assigned cause, or one to which the cause is not adequate,—it is the case of a pure fountain sending forth corrupt streams; or that of a stream which, if turbid, has a constant tendency to defecation, and yet becomes still more muddy as it flows along its course.

3. It is not, however, the fact, that education is directly and universally so corrupting a cause as to account for the depravity of mankind. In many instances it has been defective; it has often inculcated false views of interest and honour; it has fostered prejudices, and even national, though not social, hatreds; but it has only in a few cases been employed to teach those vices into which men have commonly fallen. In fact, education, in all countries, has been, in no small degree, opposed to vice; and, as the majority of the worst people among us would shudder to have their children instructed in the vices which they themselves practise, so, in the worst nations of antiquity, the characters of schoolmasters were required to be correct; and many principles and maxims of a virtuous kind were, doubtless, taught to children. When Horace says of youth, *Cereus in vitium flecti, monitoribus asper*, he acknowledges its natural tendency to receive vicious impressions, but shows, too, that it was not left without contrary admonition. Precisely in those vices which all education, even the most defective, is designed to guard against, the world has displayed its depravity most obviously; and thus, so far from education being sufficient to account for the evils which have stained society in all ages, its influence has been, in no small degree, opposed to them.

4. To come to the other facts which must be accounted for, education is placed upon the same ground in the argument as example. The early evil dispositions in children cannot thus be explained; for they appear before education commences: Nor does any man refer to education his propensity to constitutional sins, the resistance he often feels to good in his heart, his proneness to forget God, and to be indifferent to spiritual

and eternal objects ; all these he feels to be opposed to those very principles which his judgment approves, and with which it was furnished by education.

It is only, then, by the scriptural account of the natural and hereditary corruption of the human race, commonly called “original sin,”* that these facts are fully accounted for ; and as the facts themselves cannot be denied, such an interpretation of the Scripture as we have given above is, therefore, abundantly confirmed.

As the fact of a natural inclination to evil cannot be successfully combated, some have taken a milder view of the case ; and, allowing these tendencies to various excesses, account for them by their being natural tendencies to what is pleasing ; and so, for this reason, they deny them to be sinful, until they are complied with, and approved by the will. This appears to be the view of Limborch, and some of the later Divines of the Arminian school, who, on this and other points, very materially departed from the tenets of their master.† Nothing, however, is gained by this notion, when strictly examined : For, let it be granted that these propensities are to things naturally pleasing, and that, in excess, they are out of their proper order ; yet, as it happens that, as soon as every person comes to years to know that they are wrong, as being contrary to the divine law, he yet chooses them, and thus, without dispute, makes them sins ; this universal compliance of the will with what is known to be evil is also to be accounted for, as well as the natural tendency to sinful gratifications. Now, as we have proved the universality of sin, this universal tendency of the will to choose and sanction the natural propensity to unlawful gratification is the proof of a natural state of mind, not only defective, but corrupt ; which is what we contend for. If it be said, that “these natural propensities to various evils in children are not sinful before they have the consent of the will,” all that can be maintained is, that they are not actual sins, which no one asserts ; but as a universal choice of evil, when

* The term “original sin” appears to have been first introduced by St. Augustine, in his controversy with the Pelagians.

† See Limborch’s *Theologia Christiana*, lib. iii., cap. 4.

accountableness takes place, proves a universal pravity of the will, previous to the actual choice, then it inevitably follows, that, though infants do not commit actual sin, yet that theirs is a sinful nature.

Finally: The death and sufferings to which children are subject is a proof that all men, from their birth, are “constituted,” as the Apostle has it, and treated as, “sinners.” An innocent creature may die; no one disputes that: But to die was not the original law of our species, and the Scriptures refer death solely to sin as its cause. Throughout the sacred writings, too, it is represented as a penalty, as an evil of the highest kind; and it is in vain to find out ingenious reasons to prove it a blessing to mankind. They prove nothing against the directly opposite character which has been stamped upon death and the suffering of moral disease, by the testimony of God. On the hypothesis of man’s natural innocence, the death of the innocent is not to be reconciled to any known attribute of God, to any manifested principle of his moral government; but, on that of his natural corruptness and federal relation to Adam, it is explained: It is a declaration of God’s hatred of sin; a proclamation of the purity and inflexibility of his law; whilst the connexion of this state with the provisions of the covenant of grace, presents “mercy and truth meeting together, righteousness and peace kissing each other.”

As to that in which original sin consists, some Divines and some public formularies have so expressed themselves, that it might be inferred that a positive evil infection and taint had been judicially infused into man’s nature by God, which has been transmitted to all his posterity. Others, and those the greater number, both of the Calvinist and Arminian schools, have resolved it into privation. This distinction is well stated in the Private Disputations of Arminius:—

“But since the tenor of the covenant into which God entered with our first parents was this, that if they continued in the favour and grace of God, by the observance of that precept and others, the gifts which had been conferred upon them should be transmitted to their posterity, by the like divine

grace which they had received; but if they should render themselves unworthy of those favours, through disobedience, that their posterity should likewise be deprived of them, and should be liable to the contrary evils: Hence it followed, that all men, who were to be naturally propagated from them, have become obnoxious to death temporal and eternal, and have been destitute of that gift of the Holy Spirit, or of original righteousness. This punishment is usually called ‘a privation of the image of God,’ and ‘original sin.’

“But we allow this point to be made the subject of discussion: ‘Beside the want or absence of original righteousness, may not some other contrary quality be constituted, as another part of original sin?’ We think it is more probable that this absence alone of original righteousness is original sin itself, since it alone is sufficient for the commission and production of every actual sin whatever.”*

This is by some Divines called, with great aptness, “a depravation arising from a deprivation,” and is certainly much more consonant with the Scriptures than the opinion of the infusion of evil qualities into the nature of man by a positive cause, or direct tainting of the heart. This has been, indeed, probably an opinion, in the proper sense, with few; and has rather been collected from the strong and rhetorical expressions under which the moral state of man is often exhibited, and, on this account, has been attacked as a part of the doctrine of original sin, by the advocates of original innocence, and as making God directly the author of sin. No such difficulty, however, accompanies the accurate and guarded statement of that doctrine in the sense of Scripture. The depravation, the perversion, the defect of our nature is to be traced to our birth, so that in our flesh is no good thing, and “they that are in the flesh cannot please God;” but this state arises, not from the infusion of evil into the nature of man by God, but from that separation of man from God, that extinction of spiritual life, which was effected by sin, and the consequent and necessary corruption of man’s moral nature. For, that positive evil and

* Nichols’s Translation of the Works of Arminius, vol. ii., p. 156.

corruption may flow from a mere privation, may be illustrated by that which supplies the figure of speech, "death," under which the Scriptures represent the state of mankind. For, as, in the death of the body, the mere privation of the principle of life produces inflexibility of the muscles, the extinction of heat, and sense, and motion, and surrenders the body to the operation of an agency which life, as long as it continued, resisted, namely, that of chymical decomposition ; so, from the loss of spiritual life, followed estrangement from God, moral inability, the dominion of irregular passions, and the rule of appetite ; aversion, in consequence, to restraint ; and enmity to God.

This connexion of positive evil, as the effect, with privation of the life and image of God, as the cause, is, however, to be well understood and carefully maintained ; or otherwise we should fall into a great error on the other side, as, indeed, some have done, who did not perceive that the corruption of man's nature necessarily followed upon the privation referred to. It is, therefore, a just remark of Calvin, that "those who have defined original sin as a privation of the original righteousness, though they comprise the whole of the subject, yet have not used language sufficiently expressive of its operation and influence. For our nature is not only destitute of all good, but is so fertile in all evils, that it cannot remain inactive."* Indeed, this privation is not fully expressed by the phrase, "the loss of original righteousness," unless that be meant to include in it the only source of righteousness in even the first man, the life which is imparted and supplied by the Holy Spirit. A similar want of explicitness we observe also in Calvin's own statement, in his generally very able chapter on this subject, that Adam lost "the ornaments he received from his Maker for us as well as for himself ;" unless we understand, by these original "ornaments" and "endowments" of human nature in him, the principle also, as above stated, from which they all flowed ; and which, being forfeited, could no longer be imparted in the way of nature. For when

* Institutes.

the Spirit was restored to Adam, being pardoned, it was by grace and favour; and he could not impart it by natural descent to his posterity, though born of him when in a state of acceptance with God, since these influences are the gifts of God, which are imparted not by the first but by the second Adam; not by nature, but by a free gift, to sinful and guilty man, the law being irreversible: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh."

Arminius, in the above quotation, has more forcibly and explicitly expressed that privation of which we speak, by the forfeiture of "the gift of the Holy Spirit" by Adam, for himself and his descendants, and the loss of original righteousness as the consequence.

This I take to be at once a simple and a scriptural view of the case. President Edwards, who well argues against the notion of the infusion of evil, perplexes his subject by his theory of "natural and supernatural principles," which the notes of Dr. Williams, his editor, who has introduced the peculiarities of his system of passive power, have not relieved. So far, certainly, both are right; the latter, that the creature cannot uphold itself, either physically or morally, without God; the former, that our natural passions and appetites can only be controlled by the higher principles, which are "summarily comprehended in divine love." But the power which upholds the rational creature in spiritual life is the Holy Spirit; and the source of these controlling supernatural powers, comprehended in "divine," is also the Holy Spirit; from the loss of which all the depravation of man's nature proceeded.

This point may be briefly elucidated. The infliction of spiritual death, which we have already shown to be included in the original sentence, consisted, of course, in the loss of spiritual life, which was that principle from which all right direction and control of the various powers and faculties of man flowed. But this spiritual life in the first man was not a natural effect, that is, an effect which would follow from his mere creation, independent of the vouchsafed influence of the Holy Spirit. This may be inferred from the "new creation," which is the renewal of man after the image of Him who at first created

him. This is the work of the Holy Spirit ; but even after this change, this being “ born again,” man is not able to preserve himself in the renewed condition into which he is brought, but by the continuance of the same quickening and aiding influence. No future growth in knowledge and experience, no power of habit, long persevered in, render him independent of the help of the Holy Spirit ; he has rather, in proportion to this growth, a deeper consciousness of his need of the indwelling of God, and of what the Apostle calls his “ mighty working.” The strongest aspirations of this new life are after communion and constant intercourse with God ; and as that is the source of new strength, so this renewed strength expresses itself in a “ cleaving unto the Lord ” with a still more vigorous “ purpose of heart.” In a word, the sanctity of a Christian is dependent wholly upon the presence of the Sanctifier. We can only work out our own salvation as “ God worketh in us to will and to do.”

This is the constant language of the New Testament ; but if we are restored to what was lost by Adam, through the benefit brought to us by the second Adam ; if there be any correspondency between the moral state of the regenerate man, and that of man before his fall ; (we do not speak of degree, but of substantial sameness of kind and quality ;) if love to God be in us what it was in him ; if holiness, in its various branches, as it flows from love, be in us what it was in him ; we have sufficient reason to infer, that, as they are supported in us by the influence of the divine Spirit, they were so supported in him. Certain it is, that, before we are thus quickened by the Spirit, we are “ dead in trespasses and sins ; ” and if we are made alive by that Spirit, it is a strong presumption that the withdrawing of that Spirit from Adam, when he wilfully sinned, and from all his posterity, that is, from human nature itself, was the cause of the death and the depravation which followed.

But this is not left to mere inference. For, as Mr. Howe justly observes, when speaking of “ the retraction of God’s Spirit from Adam,” “ This we do not say gratuitously ; for do but consider that plain text, ‘ Christ hath redeemed us from

the curse of the law, being made a curse for us ; for cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree : That the blessing of Abraham might come upon us Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.' (Gal. iii. 13, 14.) If the remission of the curse carry with it the conferring of the grace of the Spirit, then the curse, while it did continue, could not but include and carry in it the privation of the Spirit. This was part of the curse upon apostate Adam,—the loss of God's Spirit. As soon as the law was broken, man was cursed, so as that thereby this Spirit should be withheld, should be kept off, otherwise than as, upon the Redeemer's account and according to his methods, it should be restored. Hereupon it could not but ensue, that the holy image of God must be erased and vanished."*

This accounts for the whole case of man's corruption. The Spirit's influence in him did not prevent the possibility of his sinning, though it afforded sufficient security to him as long as he looked up to that source of strength. He did sin, and the Spirit retired ; and, the tide of sin once turned in, the mound of resistance being removed, it overflowed his whole nature. In this state of alienation from God, men are born, with all these tendencies to evil ; because the only controlling and sanctifying power, the presence of the Spirit, is wanting, and is now given to man, not as when first brought into being, as a creature ; but it is secured to him by the mercy and grace of a new and a different dispensation, under which the Spirit is administered in different degrees, times, and modes, according to the wisdom of God, never on the ground of our being creatures, but as redeemed from the curse of the law by Him who became a curse for us.

A question, as to the transmission of this corruption of nature from parents to children, has been debated among those who, nevertheless, admit the fact ; some contending, that the soul is *ex traduce* ; others, that it is by immediate creation. It is certain that, as to the metaphysical part of this question, we can come to no satisfactory conclusion. The Scriptures, however, appear to be more in favour of the doctrine of traduction. "Adam begat a son in his own likeness." "That which is

* Posthumous Works.

born of the flesh is flesh ;” which refers certainly to the soul as well as to the body. The fact, also, of certain dispositions and eminent faculties of the mind being often found in families, appears to favour this notion ; though it may be plausibly said, that, as the mind operates by bodily instruments, there may be a family constitution of the body, as there is of likeness, which may be more favourable to the excitement and exertion of certain faculties than others.

The usual argument against this traduction of the human spirit is, that the doctrine of its generation tends to materialism. But this arises from a mistaken view of that in which the procreation of a human being lies, which does not consist in the production out of nothing of either of the parts of which the compounded being, man, is constituted, but in the uniting them substantially with one another. The matter of the body is not, then, first made, but disposed ; nor can it be supposed that the soul is, by that act, first produced. That belongs to a higher power ; and then the only question is, whether all souls were created in Adam, and are transmitted by a law peculiar to themselves, which is always under the control of the will of that same watchful Providence, of whose constant agency in the production and ordering of the kinds, sexes, and circumstances of the animal creation we have abundant proof ; or whether they are immediately created. The usual objection to the last notion is, that God cannot create an evil nature ; but if our corruption is the result of privation, not of positive infection, the notion of the immediate creation of the soul is cleared of a great difficulty, though it is not wholly disentangled. But the tenet of the soul’s descent appears to have most countenance from the language of Scripture ; and it is no small confirmation of it, that, when God designed to incarnate his own Son, he stepped out of the ordinary course, and formed a sinless human nature immediately by the power of the Holy Ghost. The philosophical difficulties which have presented themselves to this opinion appear chiefly to have arisen from supposing that consciousness is an essential attribute of spirit, and that the soul is naturally immortal ; the former of which cannot be proved, whilst the latter is contradicted by

Scripture, which makes our immortality a gift dependent on the will of the Giver. Other difficulties have arisen for want of considering the constant agency of God in regulating the production of all things, and of rational accountable creatures especially.

But whichever of these views is adopted, the soul and the body are united before birth; and man is born under that curse of the law which has deprived fallen human nature of the Spirit of God, who can only be restored by Christ. It is, therefore, well and forcibly said by Calvin, "To enable us to understand this subject," (man's birth in sin,) "we have no need to enter on that tedious dispute, with which the Fathers were not a little perplexed, whether the soul proceeds by derivation. We ought to be satisfied with this, that the Lord deposited with Adam the endowments he chose to confer upon human nature; and, therefore, that, when he lost the favours he had received, he lost them, not only for himself, but for us all. Who will be solicitous about a transmission of the soul, when he hears that Adam received the ornaments that he lost no less for us than for himself? that they were given, not to one man only, but to the whole human nature? There is nothing absurd, therefore, if, in consequence of his being spoiled of his dignities, that nature be now destitute and poor."*

From this view of the total alienation of the nature of man from God, it does not, however, follow that there should be nothing virtuous and praiseworthy among men, until, in the proper sense, they become the subjects of the regeneration insisted upon in the Gospel as necessary to qualify men for the kingdom of heaven. From the virtues which have existed among Heathens, and from men being called upon to repent, and believe the Gospel, it has been argued that human nature is not so entirely corrupt and disabled as the above representation would suppose; and, indeed, on the Calvinistic theory, which denies that all men are interested in the benefits procured by the death of Christ, it would be extremely difficult for any to meet this objection, and to maintain their own views of the corruption of man with consistency. On the contrary theory of God's universal love, nothing is more easy;

* Institutes.

because, in consequence of the atonement offered for all, the Holy Spirit is administered to all; and to his secret operations all that is really spiritual and good, in its principle, is to be ascribed.

Independent of this influence, indeed, it may be conceived, that there may be much restraint of evil, and many acts of external goodness in the world, without at all impugning the doctrine of an entire estrangement of the heart from God, and a moral death in trespasses and sins.

1. The understanding of man is, by its nature, adapted to perceive the evidence of demonstrated truth, and has no means of avoiding the conviction but by turning away the attention. Wherever, then, revelations of the divine law, or traditional remembrances of it, are found, notions of right and wrong have been and must be found also.

2. So much of what is right and wrong is connected with the interests of men, that they have been led publicly to approve what is right in all instances, where it is obviously beneficial to society, and to disapprove of wrong. They do this by public laws, by their writings, and by their censures of offenders. A moral standard of judging of vice and virtue has, therefore, been found every where, though varying in degree; which men have generally honestly applied to others in passing a judgment on their characters, though they have not used the same fidelity to themselves. More or less, therefore, the practice of what is condemned as vice or approved as virtue is shameful or creditable, and the interests and reputation of men require that they obtain what is called "a character," and preserve it; a circumstance which often serves to restrain vicious practices, and to produce a negative virtue, or an affectation of real and active virtue.

3. Though the seeds of sin lie hid in the heart of all, yet their full developement and manifestation in action can only take place slowly and by the operation of exciting circumstances. Much of the evil in the world, also, lies in the irregularities of those natural appetites and the excesses of those passions which are not in themselves evil; and such corrupt habits cannot be formed until after opportunities of frequent indulgence have been given. This will account for the compara-

tive innocence of infancy, of youth, and of those around whom many guards have been thrown by providential arrangement.

4. We may notice, also, that it is not possible, were all men equally constituted as to their moral nature, that all sins should show themselves in all men; and that, although there is nothing, in the proper sense, good in any, society should present an unvarying mass of corruption, which some appear to think a necessary corollary from the doctrine of the universal corruption of human nature. Avarice, the strong desire of getting and of hoarding wealth, necessarily restrains from expensive vices. An obsequious and a tyrannical temper cannot co-exist in the same circumstances; and yet, in other circumstances, the obsequious man is often found to be tyrannical, and the latter obsequious. Certain events excite a latent passion, such as ambition; and it becomes a master passion, to which all others are subordinated, and even vicious dispositions and habits are controlled in order to success: Just on the same principle as that on which the ancient *athletæ*,* and our modern prize-fighters have abstained from sensual indulgences, in order to qualify themselves for the combat; but who show, by the habits in which they usually live, that particular vices are suspended only under the influence of a stronger passion. Perhaps, too, that love of country, that passion for its glory and aggrandizement, which produced so many splendid actions and characters among the Greeks and Romans, a circumstance which has been urged against the doctrine of man's depravity, may come under this rule. That it was not itself the result of a virtuous state of mind in, at least, the majority of cases, is clear from the frauds, injustice, oppressions, cruelties, and avarice with which it was generally connected.

5. It is a fact, too, which cannot be denied, that men have constitutional evil tendencies; some are more powerfully bent to one vice, some to another. Whether it results from a different constitution of the mind that the general corruption should act more powerfully in one direction in this man, and

* *Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam,
Multa tulit fecitque puer : sudavit et alsit ;
Abstulit venere et vino.*—HORATIUS.

in another in that ; or from the temperament of the body ; or from some law impressed by God upon a sinful nature ; (which it involves no difficulty to admit, inasmuch as society could scarcely have existed without that balance of evils, and that check of one vice upon another which this circumstance produces ;)—such is the fact ; and it gives a reason for the existence of much negative virtue in society.

From all these causes, appearances of good among unregenerate men will present themselves, without affording any ground to deduct any thing from those statements concerning man's fallen state, which have been just made ; but these negative virtues, and these imitations of actions really good, from interest, ambition, or honour, have no foundation in the fear of God, in a love to virtue as such, in a right will, or in spiritual affections ; and they afford, therefore, no evidence of spiritual life, or, in other words, of religious principle. To other vices to which there is any temptation, and to those now avoided, whenever the temptation comes, men uniformly yield ; and this shows that, though the common corruption varies its aspects, it is, nevertheless, unrelieved by a real virtuous principle in any, so far as they are left to themselves.

But virtues grounded on principle, though an imperfect one, and, therefore, neither negative nor simulated, may also be found among the unregenerate, and have existed, doubtless, in all ages. These, however, are not from man, but from God ; whose Holy Spirit has been vouchsafed to the world, through the atonement. This great truth has often been lost sight of in the controversy. Some Calvinists seem to acknowledge it substantially, under the name of "common grace ;" others choose rather to refer all appearances of virtue to nature, and thus, by attempting to avoid the doctrine of the gift of the Spirit to all mankind, attribute to nature what is inconsistent with their opinion of its entire corruption. But there is, doubtless, to be sometimes found in men not yet regenerate in the Scripture sense, in men not even decided in their choice, something of moral excellence, which cannot be referred to any of the causes above adduced, and of a much higher character than is to be attributed to a nature which, when left to itself,

is wholly destitute of spiritual life. Compunction for sin, strong desires to be freed from its tyranny, such a fear of God as preserves them from many evils, charity, kindness, good neighbourhood, general respect for goodness and good men, a lofty sense of honour and justice, and, indeed, (as the very command issued to them to "repent and believe the Gospel" in order to their salvation implies,) a power of consideration, prayer, and turning to God, so as to commence that course which, persevered in, would lead on to forgiveness and regeneration. To say, that "all these are to be attributed to mere nature," is to surrender the argument to the Semi-Pelagian, who contends, that these are proofs that man is not wholly degenerate. They are to be attributed to the controlling influence of the Holy Spirit; to his incipient workings in the hearts of men; to the warfare which he there maintains, and which has sometimes a partial victory, before the final triumph comes, or when, through the fault of man, through "resisting," "grieving," "vexing," "quenching" the Holy Spirit, that final triumph may never come. It is thus that one part of Scripture is reconciled to another, and both to fact; the declaration of man's total corruption, with the presumption of his power to return to God, to repent, to break off his sins, which all the commands and invitations to him from the Gospel imply; and thus it is that we understand how, especially in Christian countries, where the Spirit is more largely effused, there is so much more general virtue than in others; and in those circles, especially, in which Christian education, and the prayers of the pious, and the power of example, are applied and exhibited.

The scriptural proof that the Spirit is given to "the world," is obvious and decisive. We have seen that the curse of the law implied a denial of the Spirit; the removal of that curse implies, therefore, the gift of the Spirit, and the benefit must be as large and extensive as the atonement. Hence we find the Spirit's operations spoken of, not only as to the good, but the wicked, in all the three dispensations. In the patriarchal, "the Spirit strove with men;" with the antediluvian race, before and during the time the ark was preparing. The Jews

in the wilderness are said to have “vexed his Holy Spirit;” Christ promises to send the Spirit “to convince the world of sin:” and the book of God’s revelation concludes by representing the Spirit as well as the bride, the Holy Ghost as well as the church, in her ordinances, inviting all to “come and take of the water of life freely.” All this is the fruit of our redemption, and the new relation in which man is placed to God; as a sinner, it is true, still; but a sinner for whom atonement has been made, and who is to be wooed and won to an acceptance of the heavenly mercy. Christ having been made a curse for us, the curse of the law no longer shuts out that Spirit from us; nor can justice exclaim against this going forth of the Spirit, as it has been beautifully expressed, “to make gentle trials upon the spirits of men;” to inject some beams of light, to inspire contrite emotions, which, if men comply with them, may lead on to those which are more powerful and effectual. If, however, they rebel against these, and oppose their sensual imaginations and desires to the secret promptings of God’s Spirit, they ultimately provoke him to withdraw his aid, and they relapse into a state more guilty and dangerous. Again and again they are visited in various ways, in honour of the Redeemer’s atonement, and for the manifestation of the long-suffering of God. In some the issue is life; in others, an aggravated death; but, in most cases this struggle, this striving with man, this debating with him, this standing betwixt him and death, cannot fail to correct and prevent much evil, to bring into existence some “goodness,” though it may be as “the morning cloud and the early dew,” and to produce civil and social virtues; none of which, however, are to be placed to the account of nature, nor used to soften our views of its entire alienation from God; but they are to be acknowledged as magnifying that grace which regards the whole of the sinning race with compassion, and is ever employed in seeking and saving that which is lost.

THE END.

